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RECORDS OF ISRAEL.

BY

GRACE AGUILAR,

AUTHOR OF "THE MAGIC WREATH," "SPIRIT OF JUDAISM," ETC.

"Thou shalt be oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee."—DEUT. XXVIII. 29.

"Yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely with thy covenant."—Ps. XLIV.

LONDON:

JOHN MORTIMER, ADELAIDE STREET, TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

M.DCCC.XLIV.

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DEDICATION.

TO LEITCH RITCHIE, ESQ.

My dear Mr. Ritchie,

The encouragement and advice of an author, experienced and talented as yourself, cannot fail to be received and acknowledged with gratitude, by those on whom they may have been bestowed. When, therefore, I recall the interest which you were kind enough to take in the first of these simple narratives when in MS.; the candour with which you pointed out faults, which I trust you will here find in some measure corrected; the warm approbation which induced you to pronounce its "illustrations of feeling excellent, and the conclusion more

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than excellent;" I cannot but feel the earnest desire to dedicate to you this unpretending little volume; conscious also that your name will lend it a merit much above that of its unknown Author.

Will you then, my dear Mr. Ritchie, add to the kindness you have already manifested, by accepting the dedication of these pages, as a trifling token of the regard and esteem which your character and talents have so long excited in

Your obliged Friend and Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

THE following tales have no pretensions whatever to what is termed historical romance. They are simply, what their name implies, "Records" of a people, of whose modern history so little is generally known, that the word *Jew* is associated only with biblical and ancient recollections, or as connected with characteristics, feelings, and spiritual incitements, wholly distinct from those which relate to man in general.

The page of modern history, more especially of the middle ages, teems with the awful sufferings and martyrdoms of the Hebrews: yet the facts are passed over, with scarcely a notice, as the justly ordained punishment for our awful sin of

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rejection, when eternal salvation and temporal happiness were so mercifully proffered.

A preface is not the place to enter upon a religious discussion. We will only observe, that if persecution and intolerance be always the signs of divine chastisement, how shall we account for the massacres and cruelties inflicted on the Protestants, and, in their early stages of supremacy, by them on the Catholics? Yet, in both these cases, martyrdom has always been considered the proof of truth, fidelity, and divine support; the seal, as it were, to the divinity of the cause for which they suffered.

Why, then, should not faithfulness to a religion far more persecuted than any other in the world, be considered in the same glorious light when applied to the children of God? Compared with their sufferings, their martyrdoms, their massacres by countless thousands at one sweep, the sufferings of other creeds are light as air. Yet who draws example from the Jew? Who lingers on the page of history when it relates to them,

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and bids the heart glow in admiration of the sufferers, in sympathy with their unparalleled fidelity, in abhorrence of the awful spirit which prompted, and left not an effort untried, to procure their annihilation? None. The narrative is perused, and if there be a remark drawn forth, it is more often on what is termed the unbelief of the persecuted, than on the horrible cruelty of their foes; thus impressing the false idea, that the latter were so far justified, by the former, *deserving* what they received.

From such annals of misery on the one side, and torture on the other, many much more harrowing, and therefore effective, narratives might have been selected, than the two now offered to the public. But from more details of human suffering, physical as well as mental, the author shrunk, believing that little amusement, and still less good, could be thence obtained.

The author is aware, too, that, from the important incident on which the first tale is founded, a far superior *romance* might have been woven,

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but she preferred the simple illustration of religious feeling, to all the richer and more delusive glow of romantic incident and plot. She has only so used fiction, as to bring historical truth more clearly forward. As the Edict was to the inhabitants of Eshcol, so it was to all the Jews in Spain—the annihilation of every earthly hope and tie, and joy, and comfort—yet welcomed by all, save the few of which the type may be found in the narrative, even as it was by the families of Eshcol, rather than the condition of apostasy proposed. To Israel it was the heaviest affliction which had befallen them since the destruction of their Temple and final dispersion. Yet still Israel exists—her numbers rather increased than lessened—her influence in America almost equalling that which was hers in Spain, and yearly increasing—while the land which sent her forth, from that hour may date her political decline, concealed, in truth, under the mighty temporal dominions of Charles V. and Philip II., but unsound even then, and gradually but surely falling, till in its present

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awful state of anarchy and misery, bloodshed and rebellion, we may justly trace the workings of Him who has so emphatically pronounced a curse upon all those nations or individuals who persecute His people, and a blessing on all who seek their good.

Although, in the second tale, the incidents, even as the actors, are fictitious, yet their original may be found many times repeated in the history of the Jews during their secret existence in Portugal and Spain. Their mode of living, the extraordinary means by which their secret was preserved, notwithstanding the multitudes to which it must have been known—the power which enabled them, through severest torture and long imprisonment, so to retain that secret as often to be liberated, from the impossibility of finding proof as to their religious creed—the constant dangers to which they were exposed—all this is not only known to, but often recalled by, persons living now, as having been encountered by their own im-

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mediate ancestors, and hanging over their own childhood.

For the particulars of the attempted escape itself, the author is indebted, not to imagination, but to a similar occurrence, described at length in Stockdale's quarto History of the Inquisition. There, however, the attempt made by a young Negro in behalf of his master (not a Jew, but accused of heathenish practices, only because the Inquisition coveted his immense wealth) was successfully executed through still greater difficulties than those encountered by Almah.

So much for the tales themselves; too brief and simple, perhaps, to need such a lengthy introduction. They are offered to the public generally, in the hope that some vulgar errors concerning Jewish feelings, faith, and character may, in some measure, be corrected; and to the Jewish public, earnestly trusting that the favour shown to the author in the reception and popularity of a former volume, may be granted also to this; which,

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though different in style, and far less valuable in matter, may, she hopes, still humbly serve the cause which she has most at heart, by raising from the dust of time and silence such records of our ancestors as cannot be wholly valueless to Israel.

Hackney,
February 14*th*, 1844.

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THE EDICT.

A TALE OF 1492.

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THE EDICT.

A TALE OF 1492.

" The love that bids the patriot rise to guard his country's rest,
With deeper mightier fulness thrills in woman's gentle breast."—(MS.)

" And we must wander witheringly,
In other lands to die;
And where our father's ashes be,
Our own may never lie."—BYRON.

" THEN thou wouldst not leave this beautiful valley even with me, Josephine?"

" Nay, thou knowest thou dost but jest, Imri; thou wouldst not give me such a painful alternative?"

" How knowest thou that, love? Perchance I may grow jealous even of thy country an it hold so dear a place in thy gentle breast, and seek a home elsewhere—to prove if thy love of Imri be dearer than thy love of land."

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"I know thou wouldst do no such thing, my Imri: so play the threatening tyrant as thou mayest I'll not believe thee, or lessen by one throb the love of my land which shares my heart with thee. I know too well, thy heart beats true as mine, thou wouldst not take me hence."

"Never, my best beloved. Our children shall rove where we have roved, and learn their father's faith uninjured by closer commune with its foes. Here, where the exiles of Israel for centuries have found a peaceful home, will we rest, my Josephine, filling the little hearts of our children with thanksgiving, that there is one spot of earth where the wandering and the persecuted may repose in peace."

"And surely it is for this cause, the love we bear our country is so strong, so deep that the thought of death, is less bitter than the dream of other homes. We stand alone in our peculiar and most sainted creed, alone in our law, alone in our lives on earth, in our hopes for heaven. Our doom is to wander accursed and houseless over the broad earth, exposed to all the misery which man may inflict, without the

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power to retaliate or shun. Surely, O surely then, the home that is granted us must be doubly dear—so sheltered from outward ill, so blessed with inward peace, that it might seem we alone were the inhabitants of Spain. O! it is not only memory that hallows every shrub, and stream, and tree—it is the consciousness of safety, of peace, of joy, which this vale enshrines, while all around us seemeth strife and gloom. Dearest Imri, is it marvel that I love it thus?"

The speaker was a beautiful woman of some two or three and twenty summers. There was a lovely finished roundness of form, a deep steady lustre in her large black eye, a full ripe red on her beautiful lip, a rose soft yet glowing as the last tinge of sunset beaming in the energy of her words upon a cheek usually more pale—all bespeaking a stage of life somewhat passed that generally denominated girlhood, but only pressing the threshold of the era which follows. Life was still bright and fresh, and buoyant as youth would paint it; but in the heart there were depths and feelings revealed that were never known

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to girlhood. Her companion, some three or four years her senior, presented a manly form and features more striking from their frankness and animation than any regular beauty. But there was one other individual, seated at some little distance from the lovers (for such they were), whose peculiar and affecting beauty would rivet the attention to the exclusion of all else. He was a slight boy, who had evidently not seen more than ten years, though the light in the dark blue eye, so deep, so concentrated in its expression that it seemed to breathe forth the soul; the expression ever lingering round his small delicately pencilled mouth, appeared to denote a strength and formation of character beyond his years. His rich chesnut hair, long and gracefully curling, fell over his light blue vest nearly to his waist, and, parted in the centre, exposed a brow of such transparent fairness, so arched and high that it scarce appeared natural to his Eastern origin and Spanish birth. Long lashes, much darker than his hair, almost concealed the colour of the eye, save when it was fixed full on those who spoke to him, and shaded softly,

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yet with a mournful expression, the pale and delicate cheek, to which exertion or emotion alone had power to bring the frail and fleeting rose. An indescribable plaintiveness pervaded the countenance; none could define wherefore, or why his very smile would gush on the heart like tears. He was seated on the green sward, weaving some beautiful flowers into a garland or wreath in perfect silence, although he was not so far removed from his companions as to be excluded from their conversation could he have joined in it. Alas! those lips had never framed a word; no sound had ever reached his ear.

An animated response from Imri had followed his Josephine's last eager words; and the boy, as if desirous of partaking their emotion whatever it might be, bounded towards them, placing his glowing wreath on the brow of Josephine with a fond admiring glance, calling on Imri by a sign to admire it with him; then nestling closer to her bosom, inquired in the same manner the subject of their conversation: and when told, there was no need of language to speak the boy's reply. He glanced

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eagerly, almost passionately around him, he stretched forth his arms, as if embracing every long-loved object, and then he laid his hand on his heart, as if the image of each were reflected there, and stretched himself on the mossy earth, as if there should be his last long sleep. He pointed to distant mountains, made a movement with his hands, to denote the world beyond them, then turned shudderingly away, and laid his head on the bosom of his nearest and dearest relative on earth.

The situation of the valley of Eshcol was in truth such as to inspire enthusiasm in colder hearts than Josephine's. Formed by one of the many breaks in the Sierra Morena, and sharing abundantly the rich vegetation which crowns this ridge of mountains nine months in the year, it appeared set apart by Nature as a guarded and blessed haven of peace for the weary wanderers of Israel; who, when the Roman spoiler desolated their holy land, Tradition said there found a resting place. Lofty rocks and mountains hemmed it round, throwing as it were a natural barrier between the valley and the world beyond.

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The heath, the rosemary, the myrtle, and the cistus grew in rich profusion amidst the cliffs; while below the palm, the olive, the lemon, orange, and almond, interspersed with flowering shrubs of every variety, marked the site of the hamlet, and might mournfully remind the poor fugitives of the yet richer and holier land their fathers' sins had forfeited. To the east, a thick grove of palm, cedar, and olive surrounded the lowly temple, where for ages the simple villagers worshipped the God of Israel as their fathers did. Its plain and solid architecture resisted alike the power of storm and time; and it was the pride of every generation to preserve it in the primitive simplicity of the past. Innumerable streams, issuing from the mountains, watered the vale; some flowing with a silvery murmur and sparkling light, others rushing and leaping over crags, their prominences hid in the snowy foam, creating alike variety and fertility. The brilliant scarlet flower of the fig-marigold, mingled with the snowy blossoms of the myrtle, peeping forth from its dark glossy leaves, formed a rich garland around the trunks of many a

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stalwart tree. And often at the sun-set hour the perfume of the orange and almond, the balsamic fragrance of the cistus, mingling with, yet apart from the others, would float by on the balmy pinions of the summer breeze, adding indescribably to the soothing repose and natural magic of the scene.

But it was not the mere beauty of nature which sunk so deeply on the hearts of the Eshcolites, as to create that species of *amor patriæ*, of which Josephine's ardent words were but a faint reflection; it was the fact that it was, had been, and they fondly hoped ever would be, to them a second Judea. Its very name had been bestowed by the unhappy fugitives from the destruction of Jerusalem, who hailed its natural loveliness as their ancestors did the first-fruits of the land of promise. Throughout the whole of Spain, indeed, the sons of Israel were scattered, far more numerously and prosperously than in any other country. Despite her repeated revolutions, her internal wars, her constant change of masters, the Hebrews so continued to flourish that the whole commerce of the kingdom became engrossed by them; and

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occupying stations of eminence and trust—the heads of all seminaries of physic and literature—they commanded veneration even from the enemies and persecutors of their creed.

With the nation at large however our simple narrative does not pretend to treat. Century after century found the little colony of Eshcol flourishing and happy; acknowledging no law but that of Moses, no God but Him that law revealed. It mattered not to them, whether Mahommedan or Nazarene claimed supremacy in Spain. Schism and division were unknown amongst them; the same temple received their simple worship from age to age; for if it chanced that the more eager, the more ambitious spirits, sought more stirring scenes, they returned to the simplicity of their fathers; conscious they had no power to alter, and satisfied that they could not improve.

Varying in population from three to five hundred families; actuated by the same interests—grief and joy became as it were the common property of all: the one inexpressibly soothed, the other heightened

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by sympathy, the vale of Eshcol seemed marked out as the haven of peace. The poet, the minstrel, the architect, the agriculturist, even the sculptor were often found amongst its inmates, flourishing, and venerated as men more peculiarly distinguished by their merciful Creator than their fellows. The sins that convulse kingdoms, and agitate a multitude, to them were unknown; for the seditious, the restless, the ambitious, sought a wider field, bidding an eternal farewell to the vale, whose peaceful insipidity they spurned. Crimes were punished by banishment, perpetual or for a specified time, according to the guilt; liable indeed to death if the criminal returned, but of this the records of Eshcol present no example.

Situated in the southern ridge of the Sierra Morena, on the eastern extremity of Andalusia, and consequently at the very entrance of the Moorish dominions; yet Nature's care had so fortified the vale, that it had remained both uninjured and undiscovered by the immense armies of Ferdinand and Isabella, who for ten years had overrun the beautiful province of Grenada, and now at the commencement of our

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narrative had completed its reduction, and compelled the last of the Caliphs to acknowledge their supremacy in Spain. Misery and death were busy within ten miles of the Hebrew colony, but there they entered not. Some aspiring youths had in truth departed to join the contending hosts; but by far the greater number, more indifferent to the fate of war, cared not on which side the banner of victory might wave: their affections centred so strongly on the spot of earth, at once their birthplace and their tomb, that to depart from it seemed the very bitterness of death.

Tedious as this digression may seem, it is necessary for the clear comprehension of our narrative; for the appreciation of that feeling of *amor patriæ* which is its basis; an emotion experienced in various degrees by every nation, but by the Jew in Spain with a strength and intensity equalled by none, and understood but by a few.

Josephine Castello, in whom this feeling was resting yet more powerfully than in her compeers, was regarded as an orphan, and as such peculiarly

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beloved; yet an orphan she was not. The youth of her father, Simeon Castello, had been marked by such ungovernable passions, as to render him an object of doubt and dread to all; with the sole exception of one—the meekest, gentlest, most timid girl of Eshcol. Perhaps it was the contrast with herself—the generous temper, the frank and winning smile, the bold character of his striking beauty, or the voiceless magic which we may spend whole lives in endeavouring to define, and which only laughs at our wisdom—but Rachel Asher loved him, so faithfully, so unchangeably, that it stood the test of many months, nay years, of wandering on the part of Simeon, who on each return to the vale, appeared more restless, more wayward than before.

Men said he was incapable of loving, and augured sorrow and neglect for the gentle Rachel, even when, seemingly touched by her meek and timid loveliness, he bent his proud spirit to woo her love, and was accepted. They were married; and some few years of quiet felicity appeared to belie the prognostics of the crowd. But, soon after the birth of a daughter,

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the wandering propensities of her father again obtained ascendancy; and for months, and then years, he would be absent from his home.

Uncomplainingly Rachel bore this desertion; for he was ever fond when he returned: and even when she once ventured to intreat permission to accompany him, it was with soothing affection, not harsh repulse, he refused, assuring her, though honoured and trusted by the Nazarene, he was seldom more than a month at one place; and he could not offer delicate females the quiet settled home they needed. Rachel could have told him that privation and hardship with him, would be hailed as blessings, but she knew her husband's temper, and acquiescing, sought comfort in the increasing intelligence and beauty of her child.

Ten years thus passed, and then Simeon, as if involuntarily yielding to the love of his wife and child, declared his intention of never again seeking the Nazarene world; and for two years he adhered to his resolution; at the end of that time hailing with pleasure the promise of another little one, to share with Josephine the affection he lavished upon

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her. This sudden change of character could not pass unnoticed by his fellows; and no man being more tenacious of his honour than Simeon Castello, it was of course exposed to many aspersions, which his passionate temper could not brook.

It happened, in a jovial meeting of youngsters when somewhat heated by excitement and wine, that the character and actions of Castello were canvassed somewhat more freely than sobriety would have ventured. One of them at length remarked, that in all probability he was glad to avail himself of the retreat of Eshcol, to eschew the hundred eyes of justice, or revenge.

"Then die in thy falsehood, liar!" were the words that, uttered in thunder, startled the assembly. "The man lives not who dares impugn the honour of Castello!" and the hapless youth sunk to the earth, before them, stricken unto death. The speechless horror of all around, might easily have permitted flight, but Castello scorned it. He knew his doom, and met it in stern unflinching silence;—to wander forth alone, with the thoughts of blood clinging

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to his conscience, till the mandate of his God summoned him to answer for his crime;—death, if he ever ventured to insult the sacred precincts of his native vale by seeking to return.

The voice of his father faltered not as from his seat of judgment, amid the elders of his people, he pronounced this sentence. His cheek blanched not as the wife and child of the murderer flung themselves at his feet, beseeching permission to accompany the exile. It could not be. Nay more, did he return, the law was such, that his own wife or child must deliver him up to justice, or share the penalty of his crime. Hour by hour beheld the wretched suppliants pleading for mercy, but in vain.

Nor did this more than Roman firmness (for it was based on love not stoicism) desert him when, in agonised remorse, his son besought his forgiveness and his blessing. He confessed his sin, for he felt it such. No provocation could call for blood. And headstrong and violent as were the passions of Simeon Castello, his father believed in his remorse, his penitence; for he knew deeds of blood were

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foreign to his nature. He raised his clasped hands to heaven, he prayed that the penitence of the sinner might be accepted, he spoke his forgiveness and his blessing, and then flinging his arms around his son, his head sunk upon his shoulder. Minutes passed and there was no sound—the Hebrew father had done his duty: but his heart had broken—he was dead!

From the moment she was released from the parting embrace of her doubly wretched husband, and her strained eyes might no longer distinguish his retreating figure, no word escaped the lips of Rachel. For the first time, she looked on the sorrow of her poor child, without any attempt to soothe or console. She resumed her usual duties, but it was as if a statue had been endowed with movement. Nor could the entreaties of her aged grandfather, her sole remaining relative, nor the caresses of Josephine, wring even one word of suffering from her lips.

A week passed, and Josephine held a little brother in her arms; the looks of her mother appeared

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imploring her to cherish and protect him; and kneeling, she solemnly swore to make him the first object of her life; belief beamed in the eyes of the dying—her look seemed beseeching the blessing of heaven on them both; but Josephine yearned in vain for the sweet accents of her voice—she never spoke again.

From that hour, the gay and sprightly child seemed changed into premature and sorrowing womanhood. She stood alone, of her race. Alone, with the sole exception of that aged relative, who had seen his children and children's children fall around him, and her infant brother. She shrunk, in her sensitiveness, from the young companions who would have soothed her grief. She did not fear that the crime of her father would be visited upon her innocent head, for such feelings were unknown to the simple government of Eshcol; but her loneliness, the shock which had crushed every hope and joy of youth, caused her to cling closer to her aged relative, and direct every energy to the welfare of her young and, as alas! she too soon discovered, afflicted brother.

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She watched his increase in strength, intelligence, and loveliness, and pictured in vivid colouring the delight which would attend his instruction; she longed intensely for the moment when her ear should be blessed by the sweet accents of his voice. That moment came not! the affliction of her mother had descended to the child she bore, and Josephine in irrepressible anguish became conscious, that not only was his voice withheld from her, but hers might never reach his ear.

Her deep affection for him, however, roused her from this mournful conviction. And energetically she sought to render his affliction less painful than it had appeared, and she succeeded. She led him into the fields of nature—every spot became to the child a fruitful source of intelligence and love, providing him with language, even in inanimate objects; by his mother's grave she instilled the thoughts of God and heaven, of their peculiar race and history; of the God of Israel's deep love, and long-suffering; and she was understood—though to what extent she knew not, imagined not, till the hour of trial came.

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That she was inexpressibly assisted by the child's rapid conception of the good and evil, of the sublime and beautiful—by his extraordinary intellect and truly poet's soul, is true, but the lowly spirit of Josephine felt as if a special blessing had attended her task, and urged yet further efforts for his improvement.

By means of waxen tablets, formed by the hand of Imri Benalmar, she taught him to read and write. Leading his attention to familiar objects, she would write down their appropriate names, and familiarising his eye to the writing, he gradually associated the written word with the visible object. The rest was easy to a mind like his. The flushed cheek and sparkling eye denoted the intense delight with which he perused the manuscripts collected, and often adapted for his use by Imri, and poesy became his passion; breathing in the simplest words, on his waxen tablets, the love he bore his devoted sister, and the pure, beautiful sentiments which filled his soul.

The kindness of Imri to her Aréli, passed not unfelt by the heart of Josephine. Tremblingly she became conscious that an emotion towards him was

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obtaining ascendancy, which she deemed it her duty to conquer, or at least profoundly to hide. She could not forget the stigma on her name, and believed none could seek her love. The daughter of a murderer (for though the crime was involuntary, such he was), was lonely upon earth. Dignified and reserved, they would have thought her proud, had not her constant kindness, her total forgetfulness of self, in continually serving others, belied the thought; but this they did think (and Imri Benalmar himself, so well did she hide her heart), that her affections were centred in her aged relative and her young brother.

But when the magic words were spoken. When Imri Benalmar, whose unwavering piety and steady virtue had caused him to stand highest and dearest in the estimation of his fellows, young and old, conjured her with a respectful deference, which vainly sought to calm the passionate affection of his soul, to bless him with her love, her trust—the long hidden feelings of Josephine were betrayed, their inmost depths revealed. Blessed, indeed, was that moment to them both. Fondly did Imri combat her argu-

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ments, that she had no right to burden him with the aged Asher, and her helpless Aréli, yet from them she could never consent to part.

"Had not Aréli ever been dear to him as a brother; had he not always intended to prove himself such?" he asked, with many other arguments of love; and how might Josephine reply, save with tears of strong emotion, to consent to become his bride?

Josef Asher heard of their engagement with delight; but he would not consent to burden them with his continued company. True he was old, but neither infirm nor ailing. He would retain possession of his own dwelling, which had descended to him from many generations; but the nearer his children resided, the greater happiness for him.

Imri understood the hint, and, as if by magic, a picturesque little cottage, not two hundred yards from her native home, rose before the wondering eyes of Josephine; and Aréli, as he watched its progress, clapped his hands in childish joy, and sought to aid the workmen in their tasks. Presents from all, as is the custom of the Hebrew nation, were

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showered on the youthful couple, to enable them to commence housekeeping with comfort, or add some little ornament or useful article of furniture to the house or its adjoining lands. The more the *Fiancées* were beloved, the greater source of public joy was a wedding in Eshcol.

The conversation which the commencement of our tale in part records, took place a few evenings previous to the day fixed for the nuptials.

On leaving his sister and her betrothed, Aréli betook himself, as was his custom, ere he joined the evening meal, to his mother's grave, to water the flowers around it, and peruse in his simple and innocent devotion the little Bible which Josephine's and Imri's love had rendered into the simplest Spanish, from the Hebrew scriptures of their race. The shades of evening had already fallen around the leafy shadowed place of tombs, but there was sufficient light remaining, for the boy to discern a cloaked and muffled figure, prostrate before his mother's grave, the head resting in a posture of inexpressible anguish on the cold marble of the tomb. The

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stranger's form moved convulsively, and though Aréli could distinguish no sound, he knew that it was grief on which he gazed. Softly he approached, and laid his little hand on that of the stranger, who started in evident alarm, looking upon that angelic face with a strange mixture of bewilderment and love; he spoke, but Aréli shook his head mournfully, putting his arm around his neck caressingly, as if beseeching him to take comfort; then, as if failing in his desired object, he hastily drew his tablets from his vest, and wrote rapidly,—

"Poor Aréli cannot speak—nor hear; but he can feel—do not weep, it is so sad to see tears in eyes like thine!"

"And why is it sad, sweet boy," the stranger wrote in answer, straining him as he did so involuntarily closer to his bosom.

"O man should not weep, and man like thee, who can list the sweet voice of nature and the tones of all he loves; who can breathe forth all he thinks, and feels, and likes. Tears are for poor Aréli; and yet

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they do not come now as they did once; for I have a Father who loves, and who can hear me too, though none else can."

"A father?" wrote the stranger. "Who is thy father, gentle boy? Thou bearest a name I know not. Tell me who thou art."

"O I have no father that I may see and hear—none, that is, on earth: but I love Him, for He smiles on me through the sweet flowers, and sparkling brooks, and beautiful trees; and I know He loves me and cares for me, deaf and dumb and afflicted as I am, and He hears me when I ask Him to bless me and my sweet sister, and reward her for all she does for me. He is up—up there, and all around." He stretched out his arms, pointing to the star-lit heavens and beautiful earth. "My Father's house is every where; and when my body lies here, as my mother does, my breath will go up to Him, and Aréli will be so happy —so happy!"

"Thy mother!" burst from the stranger's lips, as though the child could hear him; and his hand so

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trembled that he could hardly guide the steel pencil which traced the wax. "Who is thy mother—where does she lie?"

Aréli laid his hand on the tomb, pointing to the name of Rachel Castello, there simply engraved. The effect almost terrified him. The stranger caught him in his arms—he pressed repeated kisses on his cheek, his brow, his lips—clasping him, as if to release him were death. The child returned his caresses without either impatience or dissatisfaction. After a while the stranger again wrote—

"Thy sister, sweet boy—is it she who hath taught thee these things—doth she live—is she happy?"

"O, so happy! and Imri, kind Imri will make her happier still. Aréli loves him next to Josephine, and grandfather and I am to live with them, and we are all happy. O how I love Josephine. I should have been so sad—so sad, had she not loved me, taught me all; but come to her—she will make thee happy too, and thou wilt weep no more. The evening meal waits for us both—wilt thou not come? Josephine will love thee, for thou lovest Aréli."

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A deep agonised groan escaped from the stranger, vibrating through his whole frame. Several minutes passed ere he could make reply; and then he merely wrote in almost illegible characters—

"I am not good enough to go with you, my child. Pray for me—love me; I shall remember thee."

And then again he folded him in his arms, kissed him passionately, and disappeared in the gloom ere Aréli could detain him or perceive his path, though he sprang forward to do so.

The child watered his flowers more hastily than usual, evidently pre-occupied by some new train of thought, which was shown by a rapid return to his grandfather's cottage, and an animated recital through signs and his tablet of all that had occurred, adding an earnest entreaty to Imri to seek and find him.

Josephine started from the table—the rich glow of her cheek faded into a deathlike paleness, and without uttering a syllable, she threw her mantle around her and hastily advanced to the door. Imri, and even the aged Josef, threw themselves before her.

"Whither wouldst thou go, Josephine, dearest

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Josephine? this is not well—whom wouldst thou seek?"

"My *father*," she replied, in a voice whose low deep tone betrayed her emotion. "Shall he be lingering near, unheeded, uncared for by his child? Imri, stay me not; I *must* see him once again."

"Thou must not, thou shalt not," was Imri's agonised reply, clasping her in his arms to prevent her progress. "Josephine, thy life is no longer thine own, to fling from thee thus as a worthless thing; it is mine—mine by thine own free gift: thou shalt not wrest it from me thus."

"My child, seek not this stranger; draw not the veil aside which he has wisely flung around him. The penalty to both may not be waved—thou mayest not see *him*, save to proclaim—or die. My child, my child, leave me not in my old age alone."

The mournful accents of the aged man completed what the passionate appeal had begun. Josephine sunk on a seat near him, and burst into an agony of tears. Aréli clung round her, terrified at the effect of his simple tale; and for him she roused herself,

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warning him to repeat the tale to none, but indeed to grant the stranger's boon, and remember him in his lowly prayers. Fearfully both Imri and Asher waited the morning, dreading lest its light should betray the stranger; and thankfully did they welcome the close of that day and the next without his re-appearance. A very different feeling actuated the afflicted Aréli: he sought him with the longing wish to look on his face again, for it haunted his fancy, lingered on his love—and a yet more hallowed spot became his mother's tomb.

The intervening days had passed, the affection of Imri bearing from the heart of Josephine its last lingering sadness, and enabling her to feel the anguish her impetuosity might have brought not only on her father and herself, but on all whom she loved. The first of May, her bridal morn, found her composed and smiling like herself. She had placed her future fate without one doubt, or fear, in the keeping of Imri Benalmar, for the tremors and emotions of modern brides were unknown to the maidens of Eshcol: once only her calmness had been disturbed,

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when her young brother had approached her, had clasped his arms about her neck, and with glistening eyes had written his boyish love.

"Look at the sun, sweet sister; how brightly and beautifully he shines, how soft and blue the sky, and the sweet flowers, and the little birds! O they all love thee, and can smile and sing their joy! and gentle friends throng round thee, and speak loving words. O why is poor Aréli alone silent, when his heart is so full? But he can pray, sweet sister; pray as thou hast taught him: and he will pray his Father to give back to thee, all which thou hast done for him."

Was it marvel that Josephine's tears should fall over those fond words? But the boy's caresses turned that dewy joy to softer smiles, as surrounded by her youthful companions she waited the entrance of her aged relative to conduct her to the temple.

Three hours after noon the nuptial party there assembled, marriages among the Hebrews seldom being performed at an earlier hour. Twenty young girls dressed alike, and half that number of matrons, attended the bride; and proudly did old Josef gaze

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upon her, as she leaned on his arm in all the grace and loveliness of beautiful womanhood; unconscious how well it contrasted with his sinewy and athletic form; his silvery beard and hair, alone betraying his fourscore and fourteen years. There was no shadow of age upon his features, beaming as they were in his quick sympathy with all around him. The path was strewed with the fairest flowers, and the freshest moss, of varied hues, while rich garlands, interwoven with the blushing fruits, festooned the trees. The whole village wore the aspect of rejoicing, and every shade passed from the brow of the young Aréli; the flush deepened on his fair cheek, the intense blue of his beautiful eye so sparkled in light, that the eyes of all were upon him, till they glistened in strange tears.

The bridegroom awaited the bride and her companions in the temple, attended by an equal number. The little edifice was filled, for marriages in Eshcol were ever solemnized in public. The number that attended evincing the feelings with which the betrothed were regarded. The ceremony commenced, and, save the voice of the officiating priest, there was

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silence so profound, that the faintest sound could have been distinguished.

As Josephine flung back her veil, at once to taste the sacred wine, and prove to Imri that no Leah had been substituted for his Rachel, a distant trampling fell clearly on the still air. The service continued, but many looked up to the high casements as if in wonder. The sun still poured down his golden flood of light; no passing cloud announced an approaching storm, so to explain the unwonted sounds as distant thunder. They came nearer and nearer still; the trampling of many feet seemed echoing from the mountain ground; and at the moment Imri flung down the crystal goblet on the marble at his feet, as the conclusion of the solemn rites, the shrill blast of many trumpets and the long roll of the pealing drum were borne on the wings of a hundred echoes, far and near. Wild birds, whose rest had never before been so disturbed, rose screaming from their haunts, darkening the air with their flapping wings. Again, and again at irregular intervals, this unusual music was repeated; but though alarm blanched many a maiden's cheek, and the brows

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of the sterner sex became knit with indefinable emotion, the afternoon service, which ever follows the Jewish nuptials, continued undisturbed.

The eyes of Josephine were fixed on Imri, more in wonder than alarm, and Benalmer had folded his arm round her, and whispered, "Mine, mine in woe or in weal; mine thou art, and wilt be, love! whatever ill these martial sounds forbode."

A smile so bright, so confiding, was the answer, that even had he not felt her cling closer to his heart, Imri would have been satisfied. A sudden paleness banished the rich flush from the cheek of the deaf and dumb; he relinquished his station under the canopy which had been held over the bride and bridegroom during the ceremony, and drew closer to them. He had *heard* indeed no sound; but so keen are the other senses of the deaf and dumb, that many have been known to *feel* what they cannot hear. Aréli could read, in a moment's glance, the countenances of those around him, and at the same instant he became conscious of a thrilling sensation creeping through his every vein. He took the hand of Imri and looked

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up enquiringly in his face. The answer was given, and the child resumed the posture of devotion, which his strange feelings had disturbed.

The last words of the presiding priest were spoken, and there was silence: even the sounds without were hushed, and a voiceless dread appeared to withhold those within from seeking the cause. There was evidently a struggle ere the usual congratulations could be offered to the young couple: and so pre-occupied was the attention of all, that the absence of Aréli was unnoticed, till, as trumpet and drum again pierced the thin air, he darted back, and with hasty and agitated signs related what he had beheld.

"Soldiers, many soldiers!—It may be so; yet wherefore this alarm my children!" exclaimed the aged Asher stepping firmly forward, and speaking in an accent of mild reproof. "What can ye fear? Nazarene and Mahommedan have oft-times found a shelter in this peaceful valley; fearlessly they came, uninjured they departed. Wrong we have never done to man. Peace and good will have been our watchword; wherefore then should we tremble to

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meet these strangers? My children, the God of Israel is with us still."

The cloud passed from the brows of his hearers. The young maidens emulated the calm firmness of the bride, and gathering round her, followed their male companions from the temple. The spot on which the sacred edifice stood commanded a view of the village market-place, which, from its occupying the only level ground half a mile square, was surrounded by all the low dwellings of the artizans; and was often the place of public meeting, when any point was discussed requiring the suffrages of all the male population. This space was now filled with Spanish soldiers, some on horseback, others on foot, while far behind, scattered in groups amongst the rocks, many a steel morion flung back the sun's glistening rays. The villagers, startled and amazed, had assembled on all sides, and even Josef Asher for a moment paused astonished.

"Let us on, my children," he said, "and learn the meaning of this unusual muster: yet stay," he added, as several young men hastened forward to obey him.

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"They are about to speak, we will hear first what they proclaim."

Another flourish of drums and trumpets sounded as he spoke; and then one of the foremost cavaliers, attired as a herald, drew from his bosom a parchment roll. The officers around doffed their helmets; and he read words to the following import.

"From the most high and mighty sovereigns, Fer-"dinand and Isabella, joint sovereigns of Arragon and "Castile, to whose puissant arms the grace of God "hath given dominion over all heretics and unbe-"lievers, before whose banner of the Holy Cross the "Moorish abominations have crumbled into dust—to "our loyal subjects of every principality and province, "of every rank, and stage, and calling, of every grade, "and every state, these—to which we charge you all "in charity give good heed.

"Whereas we have heard and seen, that the Jews "of our states induce many Christians to embrace "Judaism, particularly the nobles of Andalusia; for "THIS they are BANISHED from our domains. Four "months from this day, we grant them to forswear

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"their abominations and embrace Christianity, or to "depart; pronouncing DEATH on every Jew found "in our kingdom after that allotted time.

"(*Signed*) FERDINAND AND ISABELLA.

"Given at our palace of Segovia this thirtieth "day of March, of the year of grace one thou- "sand, four hundred, and ninety two."

As a thunderbolt falling from the blue and cloudless sky—as the green and fertile earth, yawning in fathomless chasms beneath their feet; so, but more terribly, more vividly still, did this Edict fall on the faithful hearts who heard. A sudden pause, and then a cry—an agonised cry of horror and despair, burst simultaneously from young and old, woman and child; and then as awakened from that stupor of woe, wilder shouts arose, and the fiery youth of Eshcol gathered tumultuously together, and shrill cries of "Vengeance, vengeance! cut them down, rend the lying parchment into shreds and scatter it to the four winds of heaven; thus will we defend our rights!" found voice amid groans and hisses of execration and assault. A volley of stones fell among the Spaniards, who standing

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firmly to their arms, appeared in the act of charging, when both parties were arrested by the aged patriarch of Eshcol rushing in their very centre, heeding not, nay unconscious of personal danger, calling on them to "forbear!"

"Are ye all mad?" he cried. "Would ye draw down further ruin on your devoted heads? Think ye to cope with those armed by a sovereign mandate, backed by a mighty kingdom? O for the love of your wives, your children, your aged helpless parents —keep the peace—and let your elders speak!"

Even at that moment their natural veneration for old age had influence. Reproved and sorrowful, they shrunk back; the angry gesture calmed—the muttered execration silenced. Surrounded by his brother elders, Asher drew near the Spaniards, who, struck by his venerable age and commanding manner, consented to accompany him to the council-room near at hand, desiring their men on the severest penalties to create no disturbance. The edict was laid before them, its purport explained, enforced emphatically, yet kindly; for the Spaniards felt awed in spite of

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themselves. But vainly the old men urged that the given cause of their banishment could not extend to them. They had had no dealing with the Nazarene: they lived to themselves alone; they interfered not with the civil or religious government of the country, which had sheltered them from age to age; they warred with none, offended none; their very existence was often unsuspected; they asked but liberty to live on as they had lived—and would the sovereigns of Spain deny them this? It could not be. The Spaniards listened mildly; but the edict had gone forth, they said, unto all and every class of Jews within the kingdom, and not one individual was exempt from its sentence, save on the one condition —their embracing Christianity. It was true that many of their nation might be faithful subjects; but even did their banishment involve loss to Spain, her sovereigns, impressed with religious zeal, welcomed the temporal loss as spiritual gain. If indeed they could not comply with the very simple condition, they urged the old men instantly to depart, for one month out of the four had already elapsed, the edict

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bearing date the last day but one of the month of March. They added, the secluded situation of the valley had caused the delay, and might have delayed its proclamation yet longer, had not chance led them to these mountains in search of an officer of rank, who had wandered from them, and, they feared, had perished in the hollows.

Even at that moment a chilling dread shot through the heart of the aged Asher. Could that officer be he whom Aréli had seen but seven days previous? He dared not listen to his heart's reply; and gave his whole attention to that which followed. A second edict, the Spaniards continued to state, had been issued, prohibiting all Christians to supply the fugitives with bread or wine, water or meat after the month of April.

The old men heard: there was little to answer though much to feel; and sorrowing council occupied some time after the officers had retired. They wished to learn the condition of their wretched countrymen, and the real effects of this most cruel edict. The blow had descended so unexpectedly, it

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seemed as if they could not, unless from the lips of an eye-witness, believe it true; and they decided on sending twenty of their young men to learn tidings, under the control of one, calm, firm, and dispassionate enough to restrain those acts of violence to which they had already shewn such inclination. But who was this one? How might they ask *him?*

The old men together sought the various groups, and, expressing their wishes, all were eager to obey. Josef Asher alone approached his children, who sat apart from their companions. He related all that had passed between them and the Spaniards, and then awhile he paused.

"Imri," he said at length, "my son, thou hast seen the misguided passion of our youth, they must not go forth on this mission of unimpassioned observation alone. Our elders, the wise and moderate, must husband their little strength for their weary pilgrimage. Thou, my son, hast their wisdom, with all the activity and energy of youth. We would that thou shouldst head this band. But a very brief absence is needed. Canst thou consent?"

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A low cry of suffering broke from the pale lips of Josephine; and she threw her arms round Imri as thus to chain him to her side. "In such an hour wilt thou leave me, Imri?" His lip quivered, his cheek paled, and the few words he uttered were heard by her alone. "Yes, yes, thou shalt go, my beloved—heed not my woman's weakness. Thou wilt return; and then—then we will *depart* together." O what a world of agony did that one word speak!

The instant departure of the younger villagers occasioned some surprise, but without further interference. The Spaniards began to pitch their tents amongst the rocky eminences, as preparing for some months' encampment. Had not the inhabitants of Eshcol felt, that their cup of bitterness was already full to the brim, the appearance of an armed force in the very centre of their peaceful dwellings would have added gall; but every thought, feeling, and energy were merged in one engrossing subject of anguish. Some there were who rejected all belief in the edict's truth. They could not be banished from scenes in which they and their fathers had

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dwelt from age to age in peace and bliss. Others felt their minds a void; they asked no question of their elders, spoke not to each other, but in strange and moody silence awaited the return of Imri and his companions. Nor could the obnoxious sight of a huge wooden crucifix, which the next morning greeted the eyes of every villager, rouse them effectually from the lethargy of despair.

And Josephine, did she weep and moan now that the fate she so instinctively dreaded had fallen? Her tears were on her heart, lying there like lead, slowly yet surely undermining strength, and poisoning the gushing spring of life. In sobs and tears her young companions gathered round her; and she spoke of comfort and resignation, her gentle kindness soothing many, and rousing them to hope, on the return of the young men, things might not be found as despairing as they now seemed. But when twilight had descended and all was hushed, Josephine led her young brother to her mother's grave. She looked on his sweet face, paled with sympathetic sorrow, though as yet he knew not why he wept; and she

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sought to speak and tell him all, but the thought that his young joys, yet more than her own, were blighted—that, weakly and afflicted as he was, he too must be torn from familiar scenes and objects which formed his innocent pleasures, and encounter hardships and privation that stood in dread perspective before her ;—O was it strange that that noble spirit lost its firmness for the moment, and that, sinking on the green sward, she buried her face in her hands and sobbed in an intensity of suffering which found not its equal even midst the deep woe around her. Aréli knelt beside her ; he clasped her cold hands within his own ; he hid his head in her lap—seeking by all these mute caresses, which had never before appealed in vain, to restore her to composure. For his sake she roused herself ; she raised her tearful eyes to the star-lit heavens in silent prayer, and drawing him closer to her, commenced her painful task. Too well his ready mind conceived her meaning. His beautiful lip grew white and quivering—the dew of suffering stood upon his brow : but he shed no tear ; nay, he sought to smile, as thus to lessen his sister's

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care. But when she told him the condition which was granted, and bade him choose between—the land of his love, or the faith of his fathers—a change came over his features: he started from her side, the red flush rushing to his cheek: he drew his little Bible from his bosom, pressed it fervently to his lips and heart, shook his clenched fist in direction of the Spanish encampment, and then laid down beside the grave. "My boy, my boy, there spoke the blessed spirit of our race!" and tears of inexpressible emotion coursed down the cheek of Josephine as she clasped him convulsively to her aching heart. "Death and exile—aye, torture thou wilt brave rather than desert thy faith. My God, my God, thou wilt be with us still!"

It was not till the ninth day from their departure, that Imri Benalmar and his companions returned. One glance sufficed to read their mournful tale. On all sides, they said, they had beheld but cruelty and ruin, perjury or despair. From every town, from every province their wretched brethren were flocking to the sea-coast—their homes, their lands left to the ruthless spoiler, or sold for one-tenth

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of their value. They told of a vineyard exchanged for a suit of clothes; a house, with all its valuables, for a mule. Their gold, silver, and jewels—prohibited either to be exchanged or carried away with them—became the prey of their cruel persecutors. Famine and horror on every side assailed them: many they had seen famishing on the roads, for none dared give them a bit of bread or a draught of water; and even mothers were known to slay their own children, husbands their wives, to escape the agony of watching their lingering deaths. Their illustrious countryman, Isaac Abarbanel, Imri said, had offered an immense sum, to refill the coffers of Spain, emptied as they were by the Moorish war, would his sovereigns recall the fatal edict. They had appeared to hesitate, when Thomas de Torquemada, advancing boldly into the royal presence, raised high before them a crucifix, and bade them beware how they sold for a higher price, him whom Judas betrayed for thirty pieces of silver—to think how they would render an account of their bargain before God. He had prevailed, and the edict continued in full force.

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On a towering rock, in the centre of the mourning populace, the aged Asher stood. He stretched forth his hands in an attitude of supplication; and tears and groans were hushed to a voiceless pause. There was a deep red spot on the old man's either cheek; but his voice was still firm, his attitude commanding.

"My children!" he said, "we have heard our doom; and even as our brethren we must go forth. Let us not in our misery blaspheme the God who so long hath blessed us with prosperity and peace, and pour down idle curses on our foes. My children, cruel as they seem, they are but His tools; and therefore, as to His decree, let us bow without a murmur. Have we forgotten that on earth the exiles of Jerusalem have no resting; that for the sins of our fathers the God of Justice is not yet appeased? Oh! if we have, this fearful sentence may be promulgated to recall us to Himself, ere prosperity be to us, as to our misguided ancestors, the curse, hurling us into eternal misery. We bow not to man; it is the God of Israel we obey! We must hence; for who amongst us will deny Him? Tarry not then, my

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children, we are but few days' journey from the sea, and in this are blest above our fellows. Waste not, then, the precious time allowed us in fruitless sorrow. There are some among ye who speak of weakness and timidity, in thus yielding to our foes without one blow in defence of our rights. Rights! unhappy men, ye have no rights! Sons of Judah, have ye yet to learn, we are wanderers on the face of the earth, without a country, a king, a judge, in Israel? My children! we have but one treasure, which, if called upon, we can DIE to defend—the glorious faith our God Himself hath given. To Him, then, let us unite in solemn prayer, beseeching His guidance in our weary pilgrimage; His forgiveness on our cruel foes; and fearless and faithful we will go forth where His will may lead."

The old man knelt, and all followed his example; and silence, deep as if that wild scene were desolate, succeeded those emphatic words. A fervent blessing was then pronounced by the patriarch, and all departed to their homes.

And now, day after day beheld the departure of

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one or two families from the village. We may dwell no longer on their feelings, nor on those of their brethren in other parts of Spain. We envy not those who feel no sympathy in that devotedness to a persecuted faith, which could bid men go forth from their homes, their temples, the graves of their fathers, the schools where for centuries they had presided, honored even by their foes, and welcome exile, privation, misery of every kind, woes far worse than death, rather than depart from it. If they think we have exaggerated, let the sceptic look to the histories of every nation in the middle ages, and they will acknowledge this simple narrative is but a faint outline of the sufferings endured by the persecuted Hebrews, and inflicted by those who boast their religion to be peace on earth and good will to all men.

Reduced from affluence to poverty, from every comfort to the dim vista of every privation, without the faintest consciousness where to seek a home, or how to cross the ocean, did Imri Benalmar regret that he had now a wife and a young helpless

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boy for whom to provide? Nay—that Josephine was his ere this dread edict was proclaimed, was even at this moment a source of unalloyed rejoicing. He knew her noble spirit; and that, had not the solemn service been actually performed, she would have refused his protection—his love—and, rather than burden him with such increase of care, have lingered in that vale to die. That she was inviolably his own, endowed him, however, with an energy to bear, which, had he been alone, would have failed him. He thought but of her sufferings; for, though from her lips they had never found a voice, he knew what she endured. He told her, there were some of their unhappy countrymen, who, rather than lose the honourable situations they enjoyed, the riches they possessed, had made a *public* profession of Christianity, and received baptism at the very moment they made a solemn vow in secret, to act up to the tenets of their fathers' faith.

"Alas! are there indeed such amongst us, thus doubly perjured?" was the sole observation of Josephine, looking up sorrowfully in his face.

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"They do not think it perjury, my beloved: they say the God of Israel will pardon the public falsehood, in consideration of their secret allegiance to Himself."

"But thou, Imri, canst thou approve this course of acting? Couldst thou rest in such fatal security?"

"Were I alone, my Josephine, with none to love or care for, death itself were preferable — but oh, when I look on thee, and remember thy deep love for this fair soil—when I think on Aréli, on all that he must suffer—the misery we must all endure—I could wish my mind would reconcile itself to act as others do; that to serve my God in secret, and those of wood and stone in public, were no perjury."

"O do not say so, Imri; think not of me, my beloved: I love not my home better than my God—I would not accept peace and prosperity at such a price! Had I been alone, death, even by the sword of slaughter, would have been welcome—would have found me here—for I could not have gone forth. But now I am thine, Imri, thine, and whither thou goest I will go; and thou shalt make me another home than this, my husband, where we may worship

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our God in peace and joy, and there shall be blessing for us yet."

She had spoken with a smile so inexpressibly affecting in its plaintive sweetness, that her husband could only press her to his heart in silence, and inwardly pray it might be as she said. Of Aréli she had not spoken, and he guessed too truly wherefore. From the hour of their banishment, a change had come over the spirit of the boy; his smiles still greeted those he loved, but he was longer away than was his wont, and Imri, following him at a distance, could see him ever lingering amid his favourite haunts; and when far removed, as he believed, from the sight of man, he would fling himself on the grass, and weep, till sometimes, from very exhaustion, sleep would steal over him, and then, starting up, he would make hasty sketches of some much-loved scenes, to prove to his sister how well he had been employed.

These painful proofs of the poor boy's sorrow Imri could conceal, but not the decay of bodily strength; or deny, when Josephine appealed to him, that his frame became yet more shadowy in its beautiful

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proportions,—that the rose which had spread itself on either cheek, the unwonted lustre of the eye, the increased transparency of his complexion, told of the loveliness of another world; yet for him how might they grieve?

It happened, that one of the Spanish soldiers, a father himself, and less violently prejudiced than his fellows, had taken a fancy to the beautiful and afflicted boy always wandering about alone; and he thought it would be doing a kind action to prevent his accompanying the fugitives by adopting him as his own; believing it would be easy to rear him to the Catholic church, as one so young, and, moreover, deaf and dumb, could have imbibed little of the Jewish misbelief. Kindly and tenderly he sought and won the child's affection, and found means to converse with him intelligibly.

Incapable of thinking evil, Aréli doubted not his companion's kindness, and though aware he was a Spaniard and a Catholic, artlessly betrayed the deep suffering his banishment engendered. Fadrique worked on this; he told him he should not leave

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them, that he would bring his family and live there, and Aréli should be loved by all. He worked on the boy's fancy, till he felt he had gained his point, then erecting a small crucifix, bade him kneel and worship.

The film passed from the eyes of the child, indignation flashed from every feature, and springing up, he tore the cross to the earth, and trampled it into the dust. Ten or twelve soldiers, who had been carelessly watching Fadrique's proceedings from a distance, enraged beyond measure at this insult from a puny boy, darted towards him, flung him violently to the earth, and pointed their weapons at his throat. At that instant Josephine stood before them; for she too had watched, with the anxious eye of affection, the designs of Fadrique.

"Are ye men!" she exclaimed, and the rude soldiers shrunk abashed from her glance, "that thus ye would take the blood of an innocent helpless child—one, whose very affliction should appeal to mercy, denied as it may be to others? On yourselves ye called this insult to your faith. How else could he tell ye he refused your offers? You bade him

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acknowledge that which his soul abhors; and was it strange his hand should prove, that which he hath no voice to speak? And for this would ye take his life? O shame, shame on your coward hearts!"

Sullenly the men withdrew, at once awed by her mien, and remembering that in assaulting any Hebrew before the time specified in the edict was over, they were liable to military severity. Fadrique lingered.

"This was not my seeking," he said respectfully; "I sought but the happiness of that poor child: I would save him from the doom of suffering chosen by the elders of his race. Leave him with me, and I pledge my sacred word, his life shall be a happy one."

"I thank thee for thine offer, soldier," replied Josephine mildly, "but my brother has chosen his own fate: I have used neither intreaties nor commands."

The boy, who had betrayed no fear even when the deadly weapons were at his throat, now took the hand of Fadrique, and by a few expressive signs, craved pardon for the insult he had been led to

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commit, and firmly and expressively refused his every offer.

"Thou hast yet to learn the deep love borne to our faith by her persecuted children, my good friend," said Josephine, perceiving the man's surprise was mingled with some softer feeling; "that even the youngest Jewish child will prefer slavery, exile, or death, to forswearing his fathers' God. May the God of Israel bless thee for the kindness thou hast shown this poor afflicted boy, but seek him not again."

She drew him closer to her, and they disappeared together. A tear rose to the Spaniard's eye, but he hastily brushed it away, and then, telling his rosary as if it were sin thus to care for an unbeliever, rejoined his comrades.

The family of Imri Benalmar was the last to quit the vale. Each was mounted on a mule, and there were two led or sumpter mules, on which was strapped as much clothing as they could conveniently stow away, and provisions which they hoped would last them till they reached the vessel, knowing well they could procure no more. Some few valuables Imri

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contrived to secrete, but his fortune, principally consisting in land and its produce, was of necessity irretrievably ruined.

Josef Asher accompanied them: he had been active in consoling, encouraging, and assisting his weaker brethren. Not a family departed without receiving some token of his sympathy and love: and young and old crowded round him, ere they went, imploring his blessing and his prayers.

It was, however, observed, that of his own departure, his own plans, Asher never spoke. That he would accompany his children all believed, and so did Josephine herself: but all were mistaken.

On the evening of their first day's journey, as they halted for rest and refreshment, some unusual emotion was observable in the mien and features of the old man. He asked them to join him in prayer, and as he concluded, he spread his hands upon their heads, and blessed each by name emphatically, unfalteringly, as in his days of youth.

"And now," he said as they arose, "farewell, my beloved children. The God of Israel go with ye,

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and lead ye, even as our ancestors of old, with the daily cloud and nightly pillar. I go no further with ye."

"No further! what means our father?" exclaimed Imri and Josephine together.

"That I am too old to go forth to another land, my children. The God of Judah demands not this from His old and weary servant. Fourscore and fifteen years I have served Him in the dwelling-place of mine own people, and there shall His Angel find me. My sand is well nigh run out, my strength must fail ere I reach the shore. Wherefore, then, should I go forth, and by my infirmities bring down danger and suffering on my children. Oppose me not, beloved ones: refuse not your aged father the blessing of dying beside his own hearth."

"Alone, untended, and perchance by the sword of slaughter? O my father, ask us not this:" exclaimed Josephine, with passionate agony throwing herself at his feet, and clinging to his knees.

"My child, the Spirit of my God will tend me: I shall not be alone, for His ministering angels will

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hover round me, ere he takes me to Himself; and if it be by the sword of slaughter, 'twill be perchance an easier passage for this sorrowing soul than the lingering death of age."

"Then let me return and die with thee?"

"Not so, my child! thy life has barely passed its spring; 'twould be sin thus to sport with death. The God who calls me to death, bids thee go forth to serve Him—to proclaim His great name in other lands. Thy husband, thy poor Aréli, both call on thee to live for them; thou wouldst not turn from the path of duty, my beloved child! dark and dreary as it may seem; see, thine Imri weeps! and thou, who shouldst cheer, hast caused these unmanly tears."

She turned towards her husband, and with a painful sob, sunk into his extended arms. Asher gave one long lingering look of love, folded the weeping Aréli to his bosom, and ere Imri could sufficiently recover his emotion to speak, the old man was gone.

The death he sought was speedily obtained. The Spanish officers, and several of the men, had quitted

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Eshcol, leaving only the lowest rank of soldiery to keep watch lest any of the fugitives should return, and, taking advantage of the secluded situation of the vale, set the edict at defiance. Effectually to prevent this, the men were commanded to turn the little temple to a place of worship for true believers. Workmen, with images, shrines, and pictures, were sent down to assist them, and a pension promised to every catholic family who would reside there, thus to exterminate utterly all trace of heresy and its abominations.

The men thus employed, ignorant and bigoted, exulted in the task assigned them, and only lamented that no human blood had been shed to render their holocausts to their patron saints more efficacious still. The return of Asher excited some surprise, but believing he would depart ere the allotted period had expired, they took little heed of his movements. The work continued, crosses were affixed to every side, images decked the interior, and all promised fair completion, when one night a wild cry of fire resounded, and hurrying to the spot, they beheld

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their work in flames. It was an awful picture! The night was pitchy dark, but far and near, the thick woods and blackened heavens suddenly blazed up with lurid hue. There were dusky forms hurrying to and fro, oaths and execrations mingled with the stormy gusts which fanned the flames into greater fury. And, amidst them all, calmly looking on the work his hand had wrought, there stood an aged man, whose figure, in that glow of light, appeared gigantically proportioned, his silvery hair streamed back from his broad unwrinkled brow, and stern, unalterable resolution was impressed upon his features. He was seen, recognised, and with a yelling shout the murderers darted on their prey.

"Come on!" he cried, waving his arms triumphantly above his head: "Come on! and wreak your vengeance on these aged limbs; 'tis I have done this! Better flames should hurl it to the dust than the temple of God be profaned by the abominations He abhors. Come on! I glory in the deed."

He spoke, and fell pierced with a hundred

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wounds. A smile of peculiar beauty lighted up his features,—"Blessed be the God of Israel! the Sole One! the Holy One!" he cried, and his spirit fled rejoicing to the God he served.

Slowly and painfully did Imri's little family pursue their way. They chose the most secluded paths, but even there traces of misery and death awaited them, and they shrank from suffering they could not alleviate. There might be seen a group dragging along their failing limbs, their provisions exhausted, and the pangs of hunger swallowing up all other thoughts. There lay the blackening bodies of those who had sunk and died, scarcely missed, and often envied by the survivors. Often did the sound of their footsteps scare away large flocks of carrion birds, who, screaming and flapping their heavy wings, left to the travellers the loathsome sight of their half devoured prey. And they saw too the fearful fascinated gaze of those in whom life was not utterly extinct, as they watched the progress of these horrible birds, dreading lest they should dart upon them, ere death had rendered them insensible.

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Josephine looked on these things, and then on her young brother, whose strength each day too evidently declined.

Aréli's too sensitive spirit shrank in shuddering anguish from every fresh scene of human suffering. He whose young life had been so full of peace and bliss, knowing but love and good-will passing from man to man, how might he sustain the change? He had no voice to speak those feelings, no time to give them vent in the sweet language of poesie, which in happier hours had been the tablet of his soul. As the invisible worm at the root of a blooming flower, secretly destroying its sap, its nourishment, and the flower falls ere one of its leaves hath lost its beauty, so it was with the orphan boy. Each day was Imri compelled to shorten more and more their journey, for often would Aréli drop fainting from his mule, though the cheek retained its exquisite bloom, his eye its lustre. Imri became fearfully anxious; from the comparative vicinity of the sea-shore, he had believed their provisions would be more than sufficient to last them on their way; but from

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these unlooked for delays, the horrors of famine, thirst, that most horrible death, stood darkly before him. Josephine, his own, his loved, would she encounter horrors such as they had witnessed? Imri shuddered.

One evening, Aréli lay calmly on the soft bed of moss and heath, his sister's love had framed; his hand clasped hers: his eyes seemed to speak the unutterable love and gratitude he felt. They were in the wildest part of a thick forest in the Sierra Nevada; and Imri, unable to look on the sufferings of his beloved ones, had wandered forth alone. Distant sounds of the chase fell at intervals on the ears of Josephine; but they were far away, and her soul was too enwrapt to heed them. Suddenly, however, her attention was effectually roused by the loud crashing of the bushes near them, accompanied by low, yet angry, growls. Aréli marked the sudden change in her features, his eye too had caught an object by her still unseen. He sprang up with that strength which energy of feeling so often gives when bodily force has gone, and grasped tightly

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the hunting spear he held; scarcely had he done so, when a huge boar sprung through the thicket, his flanks streaming with blood, his tusks upraised, his mouth gaping, covered with foam, and uttering growls, denoting pain and fury yet more clearly than his appearance. He stood for a second motionless; then, as if startled by the agonised scream of terror bursting from Josephine, he sprung upon the daring boy. Undauntedly Aréli met his approach. His spear aimed by an eye that never failed, pierced him for a second to the earth; but, alas! the strength of the boy was not equal to his skill. The boar, yet more enraged, tore the weapon from the ground which it had not pierced above an inch. Once more he fell, struck down by a huge stick, which Aréli with the speed of lightning had snatched up. Again he rose, and fastened on the child. A blow from behind forced him to relax his stifling hold; furious, he turned on the slight girl who had dared attack him, and Josephine herself would have shared her brother's fate, when the spear of Imri whizzed through the air, true to its mark, and the huge

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animal, with a cry of pain and fury, rolled lifeless on the ground.

The voice of his beloved had startled Imri from his mournful trance; the roar which followed explained its source; and winged by terror, he arrived in time. Josephine was saved indeed, but no word of thankfulness broke from that heart, which, in grateful devotion, had never been dumb before. She knelt beside the seemingly lifeless body of her Aréli, scarcely conscious of the presence of her husband;—his hands—his neck—his brow—were deluged in blood;—she bathed him plentifully with cold water;—could she remember at such a moment, that no springs were near, and that if overwhelmed with thirst, the pure element would be denied them?—Oh, no!—no!—she saw only the helpless sufferer, to whom her spirit clung, with a love that, in their affliction, had with each hour grown stronger.

But death was still a brief while deferred, though so fearfully had Aréli been injured, they could not move him thence. His wounds were numerous and painful; and strength to support himself even in a

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sitting position, never again returned. Yet never was that sweet face sad;—his smiles, his signs, were ever to implore his sister not to weep for him, —to take comfort and be happy in another land— that the blissfulness of heaven was already on his soul—that if it might be, he would pray for her before his God, and hover like a guardian spirit over her weary wanderings, till he led her to a joyous home. For him, indeed, Josephine might not grieve; but for Imri she felt the deepest anxiety: the horrors to which this unlooked for delay exposed him, had startled her into consciousness, and on her knees she besought him to seek his own safety;—she would not weakly shrink, but when all was over she would follow him; and, in all probability, they would meet again in another land:—not to risk his precious life and strength, by lingering with her beside the dying boy. She pleaded with all a woman's unselfish love; but, need we say, in vain? that Imri's sole answer was, to lift his right hand to heaven and swear by all they both held most sacred, NEVER to leave her;—they would meet

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their fate together. Days past; their small portion of food and water, economised as it was, dwindled more and more away, and so did the strength of Aréli. It was a night of unclouded beauty; millions and millions of stars spangled the deep blue heavens; the moon in her full glory walked forth to silver many a dark tree, and dart her most refulgent rays on that little group of human suffering. Yet, all was not suffering; the purest happiness beamed on the features of the dying, and an unconscious calm pervaded the weary spirit of these lonely watchers. Nature was so still, they spoke almost in whispers, as fearing to disturb her.

A sudden change spread on the features of the dying boy;—Imri started—"Josephine, the chains are rent, he HEARS us," he cried; and Josephine, raising him in her arms, almost involuntarily spoke in uttered words, "Aréli! my own! my beautiful!"

He HEARD; the film was removed one brief moment from his ear; her voice, sweet as thrilling music, fell upon his soul; his lips moved, and one articulate word then came, unearthly in its sweetness,

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"JOSEPHINE!" he raised his clasped hands to heaven and sunk back upon her bosom;—his soul had hovered on the earth one moment FREE, then fled for ever.

Imri and Josephine joined in prayer beside the loved. They neither mourned nor wept; and calmly Josephine wrapt the fadeless flower in the last garments of mortality, while Imri formed his resting-place: they laid him in that humble grave, strewed flowers and moss upon it, prayed that their God would in mercy guard his body from the ravening beasts, then turned from that hallowed spot, and silently pursued their journey.

It wanted but two days to the completion of the allotted period, when faint, weak, and well nigh exhausted, Imri and his Josephine stood on the sea shore; and there horrible, indeed was the sight that presented itself. Hundreds of the wretched fugitives lay famishing on the scorching sands. Many who had dragged on their failing limbs through all the horrors of famine, of thirst, of miseries in a thousand shapes, which the very

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pen shrinks from delineating, arrived there but to die; for there were but few vessels to bear them to other lands: and these often sailed with half their number, either because the bribes they demanded were refused (for the wretched victims had nought to give), or that their captains swore so many heretics would sink their ships, and they would take no more. Then it was, that with a crucifix in one hand, and bread and wine in the other, the catholic priests advanced to the half senseless sufferers, and offered the one, if they acknowledged the other. Was it marvel that at such a moment there were some who yielded? O there is a glory and a triumph in the martyr's death! Men look with admiring awe on those who smile when at the stake; but the faith that inspired courage and firmness and constancy 'mid suffering which we have but faintly outlined, 'mid lingering torments 'neath which the *heart*, yet more than the frame, was crushed—that FAITH is regarded with scorn as a blinded wilful misbelief;—could man endow his own spirit with this devoted-

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ness? Pride might lead him to the stake, but not to bear what Israel had borne—aye, and will bear, till the wrath of his God is turned aside. No; the same God who strengthened Abraham to offer up his son, enables His wretched people to give up all for Him. Would He do this, had they denied and mocked Him?

Imri saw the cold shuddering creeping over the blighted form of his beloved, and he led her to a sheltering rock whose projecting cliffs partly concealed the wretched objects on the beach. There was one vessel on the broad ocean, and in her he determined at once to secure a passage, if to do so cost the forfeit of the few valuables he had been enabled to secrete. He lingered awhile by the side of his Josephine, for he saw, with anguish, the noble spirit, which had so long sustained and consoled her, now for the first time appear to droop. The sudden appearance of a Spanish officer, and his apparent advance towards them, arrested him as he was about to depart. He was attired richly; his whole bearing seeming to denote a person of some rank and consequence. Josephine's gaze became almost uncon-

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sciously rivetted upon him. He came nearer—nearer still; they could trace his features, on which sorrow or care had fixed its stamp. A moment he removed the plumed cap from his head, and passed his hand across his brow. An exclamation of recognition escaped the lips of Imri; and in another moment Josephine had bounded forward and was keeeling at his feet. "My father! my father!" she sobbed forth. "O God! I thank thee for this unlooked for mercy! I have seen him once again."

"Thou—art thou my child, my Josephine, whom I left in such bright blooming beauty? whom I have sought in such trembling anguish from the moment I might reach these shores? Child of my Rachel—art thou? canst thou be? O yes! yes! yes! 'Twas thus she looked when I departed. Could I hope to see thee as I left thee, when blight and misery fell upon thy native vale, as on all the dwellings of thy wretched race? And I—O God! my child, my child—curse me—hate me. I hurled down destruction on thy house."

But even as he spoke in those wild accents of

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ungovernable passion, but too familiar to the ears that heard, he had raised and strained her convulsively to his breast, covering her cheek and lips with kisses, till his burning tears of agonised remorse mingled with those of softer feelings on the cheeks of Josephine. But not long might she indulge in the blessed luxury of tears; shuddering, she repeated his last words, gazing up in his face with eyes of horrified enquiry.

"Yes, I, even I, my child. I was not sufficiently wretched—the bitter cup of remorse was not yet full. The edict was proclaimed. On all sides there was but wretchedness and unutterable misery, beyond all this woe-built world hath known. Then came a wild yearning to look again upon my native vale, to know if in truth, its concealed and sheltered caves had escaped uninjured, by the wide-spreading devastating scourge that Edict brought;—to look on thee, my child—if I might without endangering that precious life—to know the fate of my unborn babe—I dared not dream my wife yet lived. Josephine, I looked upon her tomb; and by its side beheld my own,

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my beautiful, my unknown boy! O God! O God! my crime was visited upon his innocent head! And where is—O where is he? Why may I not look upon his sweet face again?"

He ceased, choked by overwhelming emotion, and some minutes passed, ere either of his agitated listeners could summon sufficient composure to reply. But the anguish of Castello seemed incapable of increase. For several minutes, indeed, he was silent; the convulsive workings of his features denoting how deeply that simple narrative had sunk. When he spoke, it was briefly and hurriedly to relate how he had lingered in the vicinity of Eshcol, till at length discovered by a party of Spaniards sent to seek him, with a message from the sovereigns. His wanderings had been tracked, and that which he had most desired to avert he had been the means of accomplishing—the discovery of the vale. And then convulsively clasping the hands of Josephine and Imri in his own, he besought them to remove in part the load of misery from his heart—to say they would not leave him more.

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"Goest thou then forth, my father? Hast thou indeed tarried for us, that we may seek a home together?" The father's eyes shrunk beneath those mild enquiring eyes.

"My child, I go not forth," he said at length, and his voice trembled. Josephine gently withdrew herself from his arms, and laid her hand on her husband's.

"My child! my noble child," he said in smothered accents, "I am not perjured. I am still a son of Israel, though to the world a Catholic. O do not turn from me. Come with me to my home, and thou shalt see how the exiled and the persecuted can defy the power of their destroyers. Life, with every luxury, shall be thy portion; thine Imri shall have every dream of ambition and joy fulfilled. The children of Sigismund Castello will be courted, cherished, and loved. 'Tis but to kneel in public before the cross of the Nazarene—in private, we are sons of Israel still."

"Father, urge me not; it cannot be," was her calm and firm reply.

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"Hast thought on all that must befall thee in other, perchance, equally hostile lands? My child, thou knowest not all thou mayest have to endure."

"It is welcome," she answered; "the more rugged the path to heaven, the more blessed will seem my final rest."

"And thou wilt leave me to all the agonies of remorse; to struggle on with the blackening thought, that not only have I murdered those I love best on earth—my wife, my boy—but sent ye forth to poverty, privation, and misery. Josephine, Josephine, have mercy!" and the father threw himself before his child, grovelling in the sand, and clasping his hands in the wild energy of supplication.

"Father! father! drive me not mad! I cannot, cannot bear this. Imri, my husband, if thou wouldst save my heart from treachery, raise him—in mercy raise him. I cannot answer with him there! God, God of Israel! leave me not now. My brain is reeling—save me from myself."

She staggered back, and terrified at those accents of almost madness, her father sprang from the ground;

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he caught her again in his arms, while Imri, kneeling beside her, chafed her cold hands in his, imploring her to speak, to look on him again.

"My child! my child! wake, wake! I will not grieve thee thus again. But O thy husband's look would pray thee not to go forth! The God of love, of pity, demands not this self-sacrifice. Imri, one word from thee would be sufficient. Look on her. Think to what thou bearest her, when peace, comfort, and luxuries await ye, with but one word. Speak, speak! Thou canst not, wilt not take her hence."

Though well nigh senseless, well nigh so exhausted alike in body and mind that further exertion seemed impossible, Josephine roused herself from that trance of faintness to gaze wildly and fearfully on the face of her husband. It was terribly agitated. She threw herself on his neck, and gasped forth, "Canst thou bid me do this thing, my husband?" He struggled to answer, but there came no word. Strength, the mighty strength of virtue, returned to that sinking frame. She stood erect, and spoke without one quivering accent, or one failing word.

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"Imri, my husband! by the love thou bearest me; by all we both hold sacred; by that great and ineffable name we are forbidden to pronounce, I charge thee answer me truly:—Didst thou stand alone—were Josephine no more—how wouldst thou decide? The eye of God is upon thee—deceive me not!"

He turned from that searching glance; his strong frame shook with emotion; his voice was scarcely audible, yet these words came:—

"I NEVER could deny my God! Exile and death were welcome—but for thee!"

"Enough, my husband!" she exclaimed; and, throwing her arms around him, she turned again to her father, a glow of holy triumph tinging her pallid cheek: "And wouldst thou tempt him to perjury for my sake? O, no, no! father, beloved, revered, from the first hour I could lisp thy name, O pardon me this first disobedience to thy will! Did I linger, how might I save thee from remorse; when each day, each hour, thou wouldst see me fade beneath the whelming weight of perjury, and falsity? No,

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no! Bless me, O bless me, ere I go, and the prayers of thy child shall rise each hour for thee!"

Again she knelt before him, and Castello, inexpressibly affected, felt he dared urge no more. How might he agonise that heart; when, in neither word, nor hint, nor sign, did she utter reproach on him? Again and again he reiterated blessings on her sainted head; and when he could release her from his embrace, it was to secure their speedy passage in the vessel, which his command had detained in her moorings; though the hope that he should once more look upon his child, had well nigh faded ere she came.

The exiles stood upon the deck. A hundred other of the miserable fugitives had found a refuge in this same vessel, whose captain, somewhat more humane than many of his fellows, and richly bribed by Castello, set food before the famishing wanderers, directly they had weighed anchor. But even the cravings of nature were lost in the one feeling, that they gazed for the last time on the land they loved.

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There were dark thunder clouds sweeping over the sky, mingled with others of brilliant colouring, that proclaimed the hour of sunset. The ocean-horizon seemed buried in murky gloom; but the shores of Spain stood forth bathed in a glow of warm red light, as if to bid the unhappy wanderers farewell in unrivalled brilliance. For awhile there was silence on the vessel, so deep, so unbroken, that the flapping of the sails against the masts, was alone distinguishable. It was then a wild and wailing strain burst simultaneously from the fugitives; the young and the old—the strong man and exhausted female—joined almost unconsciously. In the language of Jerusalem they chanted forth their wild farewell, which may thus be rendered into English verse.

Farewell! farewell! we wander forth,
Doom'd by th' Eternal's awful wrath;
With nought to bless our lonely path,
Across the stormy wave.
Cast forth as wanderers on the earth;
Torn from the land that hailed our birth;
From childhood's cot, from manhood's hearth,
From temple and from grave.

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Farewell! farewell! thou beauteous sod,
Which Israel has for ages trod;
We leave thee to the oppressors' rod,
Weeping the exiles' doom.
We go! no more thy turf we press;
No more thy fruits and vineyards bless;
No land to love—no home possess,
Save earth's cold breast—the tomb.

Where we have roamed the strangers roam;
The stranger claims each cherished home;
And we must ride on ocean's foam,
Accursed and alone.
False gods pollute our holy fane;
False hearts its sacred precincts stain;
False tongues our fathers' God profane;
But WE are still HIS OWN.

Farewell! farewell! o'er land and sea,
Where e'er we roam, our soul shall be,
Land we have loved so long, with thee,
Tho' sad and lone we dwell.
Thou land where happy childhood played;
Where youth in love's sweet fancies strayed;
Where long our fathers' bones have laid;
Our own bright land—Farewell!

Wilder and louder thrilled the strain until the last verse, when mournfully the voices for a few seconds swelled, and then gradually died away to silence, broken only by sobs and tears. Imri and Josephine

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alone sat apart, they had not joined the melody, but their souls in silence echoed back its mournful wailing. Josephine half sat, half reclined, on a pile of cushions, where she might command the last view of Spain. Imri leaned against a mast, close beside her; but few words passed between them, for each felt the effort to speak was made only for the other, and they ceased to war thus with nature.

A sudden gloom darkened the heavens. The glow passed from the beautiful shores. A heavy fall of dense clouds hung over them, and concealed them from the eyes which in that direction lingered still. The last gleam of light disclosed to Imri, his Josephine in the attitude of calm and happy slumber. Her head reclined upon her arm; and the long dark curls had fallen over her face and neck. He rejoiced; for he thought nature had at length found the repose she so much needed. His own eyelids felt heavy, and his limbs much exhausted; but he remained watching, untired, the sleep of his beloved. Heavy gusts now at intervals swept along the ocean. The blackened waves rolled higher and higher at the call, now

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crested by the snowy foam. The vessel rocked and heaved, and speedily driven from her course, mocked every effort to guide her southward, one moment riding proudly on the topmost wave, the next sinking in a deep valley, as about to be whelmed by huge mountains of roaring water. Distant thunder, mingled with the moaning gusts, coming nearer and nearer, till it burst above their heads, louder and longer than the discharge of a hundred cannons. The forked lightning streamed through the ebon sky, illumining all around for above a minute by that blue and vivid glare, and then vanishing in darkness yet more terrible.

The elements were at war around them, cries of human terror joined with the roar of the ocean, the rolling thunder, the groaning blasts; but there was no movement in the form of Josephine. Could she still sleep? Could exhaustion render her insensible to sounds like these? Imri knelt beside her and called her by name :—"Josephine, my beloved! O waken!"

There was no answer. At that moment a bright

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flash darted through the gloom, and sea and sky appeared on fire. A strange and crashing sound succeeded, followed by a cry of agony, which, bursting from a hundred throats, echoed far and near, drowning even the noise of the raging storm, for it was the deep tone of human terror and despair. The topmast fell, shivered by the lightning, in the very centre of the deck, flames burst forth where it fell, and on went the devoted vessel, a blazing pile on the booming waters.

Imri Benalmar moved not from his knee—he heard not the cries of suffering echoing round—he knew not the cause of that livid glare, which had so suddenly illumined every object—he knew nothing, felt nothing, save that he gazed on the face of the DEAD.

* * * *

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A fearful sound, seeming distinct from the warring elements, called forth many of the hardy inhabitants of Malaga from their homes. They hurried to the beach, and appalled and startled, beheld one part of the horizon completely bathed in living fire; sea

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and sky united by a sheet of flame. Presently it appeared to divide, and borne onwards by the winds and waves, a ball of fire floated on the water. It came nearer—and horror and sympathy usurped the place of superstition, as a burning vessel rose and fell with every heaving wave. The storm was abated though the sea yet raged, and many a hardy fisherman pushed out his boat in the pious hope of saving some of the unfortunate crew. Their efforts were in vain; ere half the distance was accomplished, there came a hissing sound; the flames for one brief moment blazed with appalling brilliance—then sunk, and there was a void on the wide waste of waters.

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THE ESCAPE.

A TALE OF 1755.

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THE ESCAPE.

A TALE OF 1755.

" Dark lowers our fate,
And terrible the storm that gathers o'er us ;
But nothing, till that latest agony
Which severs thee from nature, shall unloose
This fixed and sacred hold. In thy dark prison-house ;
In the terrific face of armed law ;
Yea ! on the scaffold, if it needs must be,
I never will forsake thee."—JOANNA BAILLIE.

ABOUT the middle of the eighteenth century, the little town of Montes situated some forty or fifty miles from Lisbon, was thrown into most unusual excitement, by the magnificence attending the nuptials of Alvar Rodriguez and Almah Diaz, an excitement which the extraordinary beauty of the bride, who, though the betrothed of Alvar from her childhood, had never been seen in Montes before, of course not a little increased. The little church of Montes looked gay and glittering, for the large sums

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lavished by Alvar on the officiating priests, and in presents to their patron saints, had occasioned every picture, shrine, and image to blaze in uncovered gold and jewels, and the altar to be fed with the richest incense, and lighted with tapers of the finest wax, to do him honor.

The church was full: for although the bridal party did not exceed twenty, the village appeared to have emptied itself there. Alvar's munificence to all classes, on all occasions having rendered him the universal idol, and caused the fame of that day's rejoicing to extend many miles around.

There was nothing remarkable in the behaviour of either bride or bridegroom, except that both were decidedly more calm than such occasions usually warrant. Nay, in the fine manly countenance of Alvar, ever and anon an expression seemed to flit, that in any but so true a son of the church would have been accounted scorn. In such a one of course it was neither seen nor regarded, except by his bride; for at such times, her eyes met his with an earnest and entreating glance, that the peculiar look was

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changed into a quiet tender seriousness, which reassured her.

From the church they adjourned to the lordly mansion of Rodriguez, which, in the midst of its flowering orange and citron trees, stood about two miles from the town.

The remainder of the day passed in festivity. The banquet, and dance, and song, both within and around the house, diversified the scene and increased hilarity in all. By sunset all but the immediate friends and relatives of the newly wedded had departed. Some splendid and novel fireworks from the heights having attracted universal attention, Alvar, with his usual indulgence, gave his servants and retainers permission to join the festive crowds: liberty, to all who wished it, was given for the next two hours.

In a very brief interval the house was cleared, with the exception of a young Moor, the secretary or book-keeper of Alvar, and four or five middle-aged domestics of both sexes.

Gradually, and it appeared undesignedly, the bride

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and her female companions, were left alone; and for the first time the beautiful face of Almah was shadowed by emotion.

"Shall I, O shall I indeed be his!" she said, half aloud: "There are moments when our dread secret is so terrible: it seems to forbode discovery at the very moment it would be most agonising to bear."

"Hush! silly one!" was the reply of an older friend: "Discovery is not so easily, or readily accomplished. The persecuted and the nameless have purchased wisdom and caution at the price of blood; learned to deceive, that they may triumph; to conceal that they may flourish still. Almah, we are NOT to fall!"

"I know it, Inez! A superhuman agency upholds us; we had been cast off, rooted out, plucked from the very face of the earth, long since, else. But there are times, when human nature will shrink and tremble; when the path of deception and concealment allotted for us to tread, seems fraught with danger at every turn. I know it is all folly, yet there is a dim foreboding, shadowing our fair horizon

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of joy as a hovering thundercloud: There has been suspicion—torture, death. O if my Alvar ——"

"Nay, Almah, this is childish. It is only because you are too happy; and happiness in its extent is ever pain. In good time comes your venerable guardian, to chide and silence all such foolish fancies. How many weddings have there been, and will there still be, like this! Come smile, love, while I rearrange your veil."

Almah obeyed, though the smile was faint as if the soul yet trembled in its joy. On the entrance of Gonzalos, her guardian (she was an orphan and an heiress), her veil was thrown round her, so as completely to envelop face and form. Taking his arm, and followed by all her female companions, she was hastily and silently led to a sort of ante-room or cabinet, opening, by a massive door concealed with tapestry, from the suite of rooms appropriated to the private use of the merchant and his family. There Alvar and his friends awaited her. A canopy, supported by four of the youngest males present, was held over the bride and bridegroom as they stood

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facing the East. A silver salver lay at their feet, and opposite stood an aged man, with a small richly-bound volume in his hand. It was open, and displayed letters and words of unusual form and sound. Another of Alvar's friends stood near, holding a goblet of sacred wine; and to a third was given a slight and thin Venetian glass. After a brief and solemn pause, the old man read or rather chaunted from the book he held, joined in parts by those around: and then he tasted the sacred wine, and passed it to the bride and bridegroom. Almah's veil was upraised, for her to touch the goblet with her lips, now quivering with emotion, and not permitted to fall again. And Alvar, where now was the expression of scorn and contempt, that had been stamped on his bold brow and curling lip before? Gone—lost before the powerful emotion, which scarcely permitted his lifting the goblet a second time to his lips. Then taking the Venetian glass, he broke it on the salver at his feet, and the strange rites were concluded.

Yet no words of congratulation came. Drawn

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together in a closer knot, while Alvar folded the now almost fainting Almah to his bosom, and said in the deep low tones of intense feeling, "Mine, mine for ever now. Mine in the sight of our God, the God of the exile and the faithful; our fate, whatever it be, henceforth is one;" the old man lifted up his clasped hands, and prayed.

"God of the nameless and homeless," he said, and it was in the same strange yet solemn-sounding language as before; "have mercy on these Thy servants, joined together in Thy Holy Name, to share the lot on earth Thy will assigns them, with one heart and mind. Strengthen Thou them, to keep the secret of their faith and race: to teach it to their offspring, as they received it from their fathers. Pardon Thou, them and us, the deceit we do, to keep holy Thy law and Thine inheritance. In the land of the persecutor, the exterminator, be Thou their shield, and save them for Thy Holy Name. But if discovery, and its horrible consequence—imprisonment, torture, death—await them, strengthen Thou them for their endurance: to die, as they would live for Thee.

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Father, hear us! homeless and nameless upon earth, we are Thine own!"

"Ay, strengthen me for him, my husband; turn my woman weakness into Thy strength for him, Almighty Father:" was the voiceless prayer with which Almah lifted up her pale face from her husband's bosom, where it had rested during the whole of that strange and terrible prayer; and in the calmness stealing on her throbbing heart, she read her answer.

It was some few minutes ere the excited spirits of the devoted few then present, male or female, master or servant, could subside into their wonted control. But such scenes, such feelings were not of rare occurrence; and ere the domestics of Rodriguez returned, there was nothing either in the mansion or its inmates, to denote that anything uncommon had taken place during their absence.

The Portuguese are not fond of society at any time; so that Alvar and his young bride should, after one week of festivity, live in comparative retirement, elicited no surprise. The former attended his house

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of business at Montes as usual; and whoever chanced to visit him at his beautiful estate, returned, delighted with his entertainment and his hosts; so that, far and near, the merchant, Alvar, became noted alike for his munificence, and the strict orthodox Catholicism, in which he conducted his establishment.

And was Alvar Rodriguez indeed what he seemed? If so, what were those strange mysterious rites, with which in secret he celebrated his marriage? For what were those many contrivances in his mansion, secret receptacles even from his own sitting-rooms, into which all kinds of forbidden food were conveyed, from his very table, that his soul might not be polluted by disobedience? How did it so happen, that one day in every year Alvar gave a general holiday? Leave of absence for four and twenty hours, under some well-arranged pretence, to all save those who intreated permission to remain with him? And that on that day, Alvar, his wife, his Moorish secretary, and all those domestics who had witnessed his marriage, spent in holy fast and prayer—permitting no particle of food or drink to pass their lips from eve

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unto eve; or if, by any chance, the holiday could not be given, their several meals to be laid and served, yet so contriving that, while the food looked as if it had been partaken of, not a portion had they touched? That the Saturday should be passed in seeming preparation for the Sunday, in cessation from work of any kind, and in frequent prayer, was perhaps of trivial importance; but for the previous mysteries — mysteries known to Alvar, his wife, and five or six of his establishment, yet never by word or sign betrayed—how may we account for them? There may be some to whom the memory of such things, as common to their ancestors, may be yet familiar; but to by far the greater number of English readers, they are, in all probability, as incomprehensible as uncommon.

Alvar Rodriguez was a Jew. One of the many who, in Portugal and Spain, fulfilled the awful prophecy of their great lawgiver Moses, and bowed before the imaged saints and martyrs of the Catholic, to shrine the religion of their fathers yet closer in their hearts and homes. From father to son the secret of their faith and race descended, so early and

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so mysteriously taught, that little children imbibed it —not alone the faith, but so effectually to conceal it as to avert and mystify all inquisitorial questioning, long before they knew the meaning or necessity of what they learned.

How this was accomplished—how the religion of God was thus preserved in the very midst of persecution and intolerance, must ever remain a mystery, as happily for Israel such fearful training is no longer needed. But that it did exist, that Jewish children, in the very midst of monastic and convent tuition, yet adhered to the religion of their fathers—never by word or sign betrayed the secret with which they were entrusted; and, in their turn, became husbands and fathers, conveying their solemn and dangerous inheritance to their posterity—that such things were, there are those still amongst the Hebrews of England to affirm and recall, claiming among their own ancestry, but one generation removed, those who have thus concealed, and thus adhered. It was the power of God, not the power of man. Human strength had been utterly inefficient. Torture and

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death would long before have annihilated every remnant of Israel's devoted race. But it might not be; for God had spoken. And, as a living miracle, a lasting record of His truth, His justice, aye, and mercy, Israel was preserved in the midst of danger—in the very face of death, and will be preserved for ever.

It was no mere rejoicing ceremony, that of marriage, amongst the disguised and hidden Israelites of Portugal and Spain. They were binding themselves to preserve and propagate a persecuted faith. They were no longer its sole repositors. Did the strength of one waver, all was at an end. They were united in the sweet links of love—framing for themselves new ties, new hopes, new blessings in a rising family—all of which, at one blow, might be destroyed. They existed in an atmosphere of death, yet they lived and flourished. But so situated, it was not strange that human emotion, both in Alvar and his bride, should, on their wedding-day, have gained ascendancy; and the solemn hour, which made them one in the sight of the God they worshipped, should

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have been fraught with a terror and a shuddering, of which Jewish lovers in free and happy England can have no knowledge.

Alvar Rodriguez was one of those high and noble spirits, on whom the chain of deceit and concealment weighed heavily; and there were times when it had been difficult to suppress and conceal his scorn of those outward observances, which his apparent Catholicism compelled. When united to Almah, however, he had a stronger incentive than his own safety; and as time passed on, and he became a father, caution and circumspection, if possible, increased with the deep passionate feelings of tenderness towards the mother and child. As the boy grew and flourished, the first feelings of dread, which the very love he excited called forth at his birth, subsided into a kind of tranquil calm, which even Almah's foreboding spirit trusted would last, as the happiness of others of her race.

Though Alvar's business was carried on both at Montes and at Lisbon, the bulk of both his own and his wife's property was, by a strange chance, invested

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at Badajos, a frontier town of Spain; and whence he had often intended to remove it, but had always been prevented. It happened that early in the month of June, some affairs calling him to Lisbon, he resolved to delay removing it no longer, smiling at his young wife's half solicitation to let it remain where it was, and playfully accusing her of superstition—a charge she cared not to deny. The night before his intended departure, his young Moorish secretary, in other words, an Israelite of Barbary extraction, entered his private closet, with a countenance of entreaty and alarm, earnestly conjuring his master to give up his Lisbon expedition, and retire with his wife and son to Badajos or Oporto, or some distant city, at least for a while. Anxiously Rodriguez enquired wherefore.

"You remember the Señor Leyva, your worship's guest a week or two ago?"

"Perfectly. What of him?"

"Master, I like him not. If danger befall us, it will come through him. I watched him closely, and every hour of his stay shrunk from him the more. He was a stranger?"

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"Yes; benighted, and had lost his way. It was impossible to refuse him hospitality. That he stayed longer than he had need, I grant; but there is no cause of alarm in that—he liked his quarters."

"Master!" replied the Moor earnestly, "I do not believe his tale. He was no casual traveller. I cannot trust him."

"You are not called upon to do so, man!" said Alvar, laughing. "What do you believe him to be, that you would inoculate me with your own baseless alarm?"

Hassan Ben Ahmed's answer, whatever it might be, for it was whispered fearfully in his master's ear, had the effect of sending every drop of blood from Alvar's face to his very heart. But he shook off the stagnating dread. He combated the prejudices of his follower as unreasonable and unfounded. Hassan's alarm, however, could only be soothed by the fact, that so suddenly to change his plans would but excite suspicion. If Leyva were what he feared, his visit must already have been followed by the usual terrific effects. Alvar promised, however, to settle his affairs

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at Lisbon as speedily as he could, and return for Almah and his son, and convey them to some place of greater security until the imagined danger was passed.

In spite of his assumed indifference, however, Rodriguez could not bid his wife and child farewell without a pang of dread, which it was difficult to conceal. The step between life and death—security and destruction—was so small, it might be passed unconsciously, and then the strongest nerve might shudder at the dark abyss before him. Again and again he turned to go, and yet again returned; and it was with a feeling literally of desperation he at length tore himself away.

A fearful trembling was on Almah's heart as she gazed after him, but she would not listen to its voice.

"It is folly," she said, self-upbraidingly. "My Alvar is ever chiding this too doubting heart. I will not disobey him, by fear and foreboding in his absence. The God of the nameless is with him and me." And she raised her eyes to the blue arch above her, with an expression that needed not voice to mark it prayer.

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About a week after Alvar's departure, Almah was sitting by the cradle of her boy, watching his soft and rosy slumbers, with a calm sweet thankfulness that such a treasure was her own. The season had been unusually hot and dry, but the apartment in which the young mother sat, opened on a pleasant spot, thickly shaded with orange, lemon, and almond trees, and decked with a hundred other richly hued and richly scented plants; in the centre of which a fountain sent up its heavy showers, which fell back on the marble bed, with a splash and coolness peculiarly refreshing, and sparkled in the sun as glittering gems.

A fleet yet heavy step resounded from the garden, which seemed suddenly and forcibly restrained into a less agitated movement. A shadow fell between her and the sunshine, and, starting, Almah looked hastily up. Hassan Ben Ahmed stood before her, a paleness on his swarthy cheek, and a compression on his nether lip, betraying strong emotion painfully restrained.

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"My husband! Hassan. What news bring you of him? Why are you alone?"

He laid his hand on her arm, and answered in a voice which so quivered that only ears eager as her own could have distinguished his meaning.

"Lady, dear—dear lady, you have a firm and faithful heart. O! for the love of Him who calls on you to suffer, awake its strength and firmness. My dear, my honored lady, sink not, fail not! O God of mercy, support her now!" he added, flinging himself on his knees before her—as Almah one moment sprang up with a smothered shriek, and the next sank back on her seat rigid as marble.

Not another word she needed. Hassan thought to have prepared, gradually to have told, his dread intelligence; but he had said enough. Called upon to suffer, and for Him, her God—her doom was revealed in those brief words. One minute of such agonised struggle, that her soul and body seemed about to part beneath it; and the wife and mother roused herself to do. Lip, cheek, and brow vied in

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their ashen whiteness with her robe; the blue veins rose distended as cords; and the voice—had not Hassan gazed upon her, he had not known it as her own!

She commanded him to tell her briefly all, and even while he spoke, seemed revolving in her own mind, the decision which not four and twenty hours after Hassan's intelligence she put into execution.

It was as Ben Ahmed had feared. The known popularity and rumoured riches of Alvar Rodriguez, had excited the jealousy of that secret and awful tribunal, the Inquisition, one of whose innumerable spies, under the feigned name of Leyva, had obtained entrance within Alvar's hospitable walls. One unguarded word or movement, the faintest semblance of secresy or caution, were all sufficient; nay, without these, more than a common share of wealth or felicity, were enough for the unconscious victims to be marked, tracked, and seized, without preparation or suspicion of their fate. Alvar had chanced to mention his intended visit to Lisbon; and the better to conceal the agent of his arrest, as also to make

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it more secure, they waited till his arrival there, watched their opportunity, and seized and conveyed him to those cells whence few returned in life, propagating the charge of relapsed Judaism, as the cause of his arrest. It was a charge too common for remark; and the power which interfered, too mighty for resistance. The confusion of the arrest soon subsided; but it lasted long enough for the faithful Hassan to escape, and, by dint of very rapid travelling, reach Montes not four hours after his master's seizure. The day was in consequence before them, and he ceased not to conjure his lady to fly at once; the officers of the Inquisition could scarcely be there before night-fall.

"You must take advantage of it, Hassan, and all of you who love me, for my child, my boy!" she had clasped him to her bosom, and a convulsion contracted her beautiful features as she spoke. "You must take care of him! convey him to Holland or England; take jewels and gold sufficient; and—and make him love his parents—he may never see either of them more. Hassan, Hassan, swear to protect

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my child!" she added, with a burst of such sudden and passionate agony, it seemed as if life or reason must bend beneath it. Bewildered by her words, as terrified by her emotion, Ben Ahmed gently removed the trembling child from the fond arms that for the first time failed to support him—gave him hastily to the care of his nurse, who was also a Jewess, said a few words in Hebrew, detailing what had passed, and beseeching her to prepare for flight, and then returned to his mistress. The effects of that prostrating agony remained; but she had so far conquered, as to seem outwardly calm; and in answer to his respectful and anxious looks, besought him not to fear for her, nor to dissuade her from her purpose, but to aid her in its accomplishment. She summoned her household around her, detailed what had befallen, and bade them seek their own safety in flight; and when in tears and grief they left her, and but those of her own faith remained, she solemnly committed her child to their care, and informed them of her own determination to proceed directly to Lisbon. In vain Hassan Ben Ahmed

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conjured her to give up the idea:—it was little short of madness—how could she aid his master? —why not secure her own safety, that if indeed he should escape, the blessing of her love would be yet preserved him?

"Do not fear for your master, Hassan," was the calm reply; "ask not of my plans, for at this moment they seem but chaos, but of this be assured, we shall live or die together."

More she revealed not: but when the officers of the Inquisition arrived, near night-fall, they found nothing but deserted walls. The magnificent furniture and splendid paintings which alone remained, of course were seized by the holy office, by whom Alvar's property was also confiscated. Had his arrest been deferred three months longer, all would have gone —swept off by the same rapacious power, to whom great wealth was ever proof of great guilt—but, as it was, the greater part, secured in Spain, remained untouched; a circumstance peculiarly fortunate, as Almah's plans needed the aid of gold.

We have no space to linger on the mother's feel-

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ings, as she parted from her boy; gazing on him, perhaps, for the last time. Yet she neither wept nor sighed. There was but one other feeling stronger in that gentle bosom—a wife's devotion—and to that alone she might listen now.

Great was old Gonzalos' terror and astonishment, when Almah, attended only by Hassan Ben Ahmed, and both attired in the Moorish costume, entered his dwelling and implored his concealment and aid. The arrest of Alvar Rodriguez had, of course, thrown every secret Hebrew into the greatest alarm, though none dared be evinced. Gonzalos' only hope and consolation was, that Almah and her child had escaped; and to see her in the very centre of danger —even to listen to her calmly proposed plans— seemed so like madness, that he used every effort to alarm her into their relinquishment. But this could not be; and with the darkest forebodings, the old man at length yielded to the stronger, more devoted spirit, with whom he had to deal.

His mistress once safely under Gonzalos' roof, Ben Ahmed departed under cover of night, in com-

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pliance with her earnest entreaties, to rejoin her child, and to convey him and his nurse to England, that blessed land, where the veil of secresy could be removed.

About a week after the incarceration of Alvar, a young Moor sought and obtained admission to the presence of Juan Pacheco, the secretary of the Inquisition, as informer against Alvar Rodriguez. He stated that he had taken service with him as clerk or secretary, on condition that he would give him baptism and instruction in the holy Catholic faith; that Alvar had not yet done so: that many things in his establishment proclaimed a looseness of orthodox principles, which the holy office would do well to notice. Meanwhile he humbly offered a purse containing seventy pieces of gold, to obtain masses for his salvation.

This last argument carried more weight than all the rest. The young Moor, who boldly gave his name as Hassan Ben Ahmed (which was confirmation strong of his previous statement, as in Leyva's information of Alvar and his household, the Moorish secre-

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tary was particularly specified)—was listened to with attention, and finally received in Pacheco's own household, as junior clerk and servant to the holy office.

Despite his extreme youthfulness, and delicacy of figure, face, and voice, Hassan's activity and zeal to oblige every member of the holy office, superiors and inferiors, gradually gained him the favour and good-will of all. There was no end to his resources for serving others; and thus he had more opportunities of seeing the prisoners in a few weeks, than others of the same rank as himself, had had in years. But the prisoner he most longed to see was still unfound, and it was not till summoned before his judges, in the grand hall of Inquisition and of torture, Hassan Ben Ahmed gazed once more upon his former master. He had attended Pacheco in his situation of junior clerk, but had seated himself so deeply in the shade, that though every movement in both the face and form of Alvar was distinguishable to him, Hassan himself was invisible.

The trial, if trial such iniquitous proceedings may

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be called, proceeded; but in nought did Alvar Rodriguez fail in his bearing or defence. Marvellous and superhuman must that power have been, which, in such a scene and hour, prevented all betrayal of the true faith the victims bore. Once Judaism confessed, the doom was death. And again and again have the sons of Israel remained in the terrible dungeons of the Inquisition; endured every species of torture, during a space of seven, ten, or twelve years; and then been released, because no proof could be brought of their being, indeed, that accursed thing—a Jew. And then it was that they fled from scenes of such fearful trial, to lands of toleration and freedom, and there embraced openly and rejoicingly that blessed faith, for which in secret they had borne so much.

Alvar Rodriguez was one of these, prepared to suffer but not reveal. They applied the torture, but neither word nor groan was extracted from him. Engrossed with the prisoner, for it was his task to write down whatever disjointed words might escape his lips, Pacheco neither noticed nor even remembered the presence of the young Moor. No unusual

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paleness could be visible on his embrowned cheek; but his whole frame felt to himself, to have become rigid as stone. A deadly sickness had crept over him: and the terrible conviction of all which rested with him to do, alone prevented his sinking senseless on the earth.

The terrible struggle was at length at an end. Alvar was released for the time being, and remanded to his dungeon. Availing himself of the liberty he enjoyed in the little notice now taken of his movements, Hassan reached the prison before either Alvar or his guards. A rapid glance told him its situation, overlooking a retired part of the court cultivated as a garden. The height of the wall seemed about forty feet, and there were no windows of observation on either side. This was fortunate, the more so as Hassan had before made friends with the old gardener, and pretending excessive love of gardening, had worked just under the window, little dreaming its vicinity to him he sought.

A well-known Hebrew air, with its plaintive Hebrew words, sung tremblingly and softly under

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his window, first roused Alvar to the sense that a friend was near. He started, almost in superstitious terror, for the voice seemed an echo to that which was ever sounding in his heart. That loved one it could not be, nay, he dared not even wish it: but still the words were Hebrew, and, for the first time, memory flashed back a figure in Moorish garb, who had flitted by him on his return to his prison, after his examination.

Hassan—the faithful Hassan!—Alvar felt certain it could be none but he: though in the moment of sudden excitement, the voice had seemed another's. He looked from the window; the Moor was bending over the flowers, but Alvar felt confirmed in his suspicions, and his heart throbbed with the sudden hope of liberty. He whistled,—and a movement in the figure below convinced him he was heard.

One point was gained: the next was more fraught with danger; yet it was accomplished. In a bunch of flowers drawn up by a thin string which Alvar chanced to possess, Ben Ahmed had concealed a file; and as he watched it ascend, and beheld the flowers

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scattered to the winds, in token that they had done their work, for Alvar dared not retain them in his prison, Hassan felt again that prostration of bodily power which had before assailed him from such a different cause; and it was an almost convulsive effort to retain his faculties; but a merciful Providence watched over him and Alvar, making the feeblest and the weakest, instruments of his all-sustaining love.

We are not permitted space to linger on the various ingenious methods adopted by Hassan Ben Ahmed to forward and mature his plans. Suffice it that all seemed to smile upon him. The termination of the garden wall led, by a concealed door, to a subterranean passage running to the banks of the Tagus. This fact, as also the secret spring of the trap, the old gardener in a moment of unwise conviviality imparted to Ben Ahmed, little imagining the special blessing which such unexpected information secured.

An alcayde and about twenty guards did sometimes patrol the garden within sight of Alvar's window; but this did not occur often, such caution seeming unnecessary.

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It had been an evening of unwonted festivity among the soldiers and servants of the holy office, which had at length subsided into the heavy slumbers of general intoxication. Hassan had supped with the gardener, and plying him well with wine, soon produced the desired effect. Four months had the Moor spent within the dreaded walls, and the moment had now come when delay need be no more. At midnight all was hushed into profound silence, not a leaf stirred, and the night was so unusually still that the faintest sound would have been distinguished. Hassan stealthily crept round the outposts. Many of the guards were slumbering in various attitudes upon their posts, and others, dependent on his promised watchfulness, were literally deserted. He stood beneath the window. One moment he clasped his hands and bowed his head in one mighty, piercing, though silent prayer; and then dug hastily in the flower bed at his feet, removing from thence a ladder of ropes, which had lain there some days concealed, and flung a pebble with correct aim against the bars of Alvar's window. The sound, though scarcely loud

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enough to disturb a bird, reverberated on the trembling heart, which heard, as if a thousand cannons had been discharged.

A moment of agonised suspense, and Alvar Rodriguez stood at the window, the bar he had removed, in his hand. He let down the string, to which Hassan's now trembling hands secured the ladder and drew it to the wall. His descent could not have occupied two minutes, at the extent; but to that solitary watcher, what eternity of suffering did they seem! Alvar was at his side, had clasped his hands, had called him, "Hassan! brother!" in tones of intense feeling, but no word replied. He sought to fly, to point to the desired haven; but his feet seemed suddenly rooted to the earth. Alvar threw his arm around him, and drew him forwards. A sudden and unnatural strength returned. Noiselessly and fleetly as their feet could go, they sped beneath the shadow of the wall. A hundred yards alone divided them from the secret door. A sudden sound broke the oppressive stillness. It was the tramp of heavy feet, and the clash of arms;

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the light of many torches flashed upon the darkness. They darted forward in the fearful excitement of despair; but the effort was void and vain. A wild shout of challenge—of alarm—and they were surrounded, captured, so suddenly, so rapidly, Alvar's very senses seemed to reel: but frightfully they were recalled. A shriek, so piercing, it seemed to rend the very heavens, burst through the still air. The figure of the Moor rushed from the detaining grasp of the soldiery, regardless of bared steel, and pointed guns, and flung himself at the feet of Alvar.

"O God, my husband! I have murdered him!" were the strange appalling words which burst upon his ear, and the lights flashing upon his face as he sunk prostrate and lifeless on the earth, revealed to Alvar's tortured senses the features of his WIFE.

How long that dead faint continued, Almah knew not, but when sense returned she found herself in a dark and dismal cell; her upper garment and turban removed; while the plentiful supply of water, which had partially restored life, had removed in a great degree the dye which had given her countenance its

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Moorish hue. Had she wished to continue concealment, one glance around her would have proved the effort vain. Her sex was already known, and the stern dark countenances near her breathed but ruthlessness and rage. Some brief questions were asked, relative to her name, intent, and faith, which she answered calmly.

"In revealing my name," she said, "my intention must also be disclosed. The wife of Alvar Rodriguez had not sought these realms of torture and death; had not undergone all the miseries of disguise and servitude; but for one hope, one intent—the liberty of her husband."

"Thus proving his guilt," was the rejoinder. "Had you known him innocent you would have waited the justice of the holy office to give him freedom."

"Justice!" she repeated bitterly: "Had the innocent never suffered, I might have trusted. But I knew accusation was synonymous with death, and therefore came I here. For my faith, mine is my husband's."

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"And know you the doom of all who attempt or abet escape? Death! death by burning. And this you have hurled upon him and yourself. It is not the holy office, but his wife, who has condemned him." And with jibing laugh they left her, securing with heavy bolt and bar the iron door. She darted forwards; beseeching them, as they hoped for mercy, to take her to her husband; to confine them underground a thousand fathoms deep, so that they might but be together; but only the hollow echo of her own voice replied; and the wretched girl sunk back upon the ground, relieved from present suffering by long hours of utter insensibility.

It was not till brought from their respective prisons to hear pronounced on them the sentence of death, that Alvar Rodriguez and his heroic wife once more gazed upon each other.

They had provided Almah, at her own entreaty, with female habiliments, for in the bewildering agony of her spirit, she attributed the failure of her scheme for the rescue of her husband, to her having disobeyed the positive command of God, and adopted

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a male disguise, which in His eyes was abomination, but which in her wild desire to save Alvar she had completely overlooked; and she now in consequence shrunk from the fatal garb with agony and loathing. Yet despite the haggard look of intense mental and bodily suffering, the loss of her lovely hair, which she had cut close to her head, lest by the merest chance its length and luxuriance should discover her, so exquisite, so touching, was her delicate loveliness, that her very judges, stern, unbending, as was their nature, looked on her with an admiration almost softening them to mercy.

And now for the first time Alvar's manly composure seemed about to desert him. He too had suffered, almost as herself, save that her devotedness, her love, appeared to give him strength, to endow him with courage, even to look upon her fate, blended, as it now was with his own, with calm trust in that merciful God who called him thus early to Himself. Almah could not realise such thoughts. But one image was ever present, seeming to mock her very misery to madness. Her effort had failed; had she

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not so wildly sought her husband's escape—had she but waited—they might have released him; and now, what was she but his murderess?

Little passed between the prisoners and their judges. Their guilt was all-sufficiently proved by their endeavours to escape, which in itself was a crime always visited by death; and for these manifold sins and misdemeanours they were sentenced to be burnt alive on All Saints day, in the grand square of the Inquisition, at nine o'clock in the morning; and proclamation commanded to be made throughout Lisbon, that all who sought to witness and assist at the ceremony, should receive remission of sins, and be accounted worthy servants of Jesus Christ. The lesser severity of strangling the victims before burning was denied them, as they neither repented, nor had trusted to the justice and clemency of the holy office; but had attempted to avert a deserved fate by flight.

Not a muscle of Alvar's fine countenance moved during this awful sentence. He stood proudly and loftily erect, regarding those that spake with an eye, bright, stern, unflinching as their own: but a change

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passed over it, as, breaking from the guard around, Almah flung herself on her knees at his feet.

"Alvar! Alvar! I have murdered—! My husband! O my husband, say you forgive—forgive—"

"Hush! hush, beloved! mine own heroic Almah, fail not now," he answered, with a calm and tender seriousness, which seeming to still that crushing agony, strengthened her to bear; and raising her, he pressed her to his breast.

"We have but to die, as we have lived, my own! true to that God, whose chosen and whose firstborn we are, have been, and shall be unto death, ay, and *beyond* it. He will protect our poor orphan, for He has promised the fatherless shall be His care. Look up, my beloved, and say you can face death with Alvar, calmly, faithfully, as you sought to live for him. God has chosen for us a better heritage than one of earth."

She raised her head from his bosom; the terror and the agony had passed from that sweet face,—it was tranquil as his own.

"It was not my own death I feared," she said

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unfalteringly; "it was but the weakness of human love: but—it is over now. Love is mightier than death: there is only love in heaven."

"Ay!" answered Alvar, and, proudly and sternly, he waved back the soldiers, who had hurried forward to divide them. "Men of a mistaken and bloody creed! behold how the scorned and persecuted Israelites can love and die. While there was a hope, that we could serve our God, the Holy, and the Only One, better in life than in death, it was our duty to preserve that life, and endure torture for His sake, rather than reveal the precious secret of our sainted faith and heavenly heritage. But now that hope is at an end, now that no human means can save us from the doom pronounced, know, ye have judged rightly of our creed. We ARE those chosen children of God, by you deemed blasphemous and heretic. Do what ye will, men of blood and guile, ye cannot rob us of our faith!"

The impassioned tones of natural eloquence awed even the rude crowd around; but more was not permitted. Rudely severed, and committed to their

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own guards, the prisoners were borne to their respective dungeons. To Almah, those earnest words had been as the voice of an angel, hushing every former pang to rest; and in the solitude and darkness of the intervening hours, even the thought of her child could not rob her soul of its calm, or prayer of its strength.

The 1st of November, 1755, dawned cloudless and lovely, as it had been the last forty days. Never had there been a season more gorgeous in its sunny splendour, more brilliant in the intense azure of its arching heaven, than the present. Scarcely any rain had fallen for many months, and the heat had at first been intolerable, but, within the last six weeks, a freshness and coolness had infused the atmosphere, and revived the earth.

As it was not a regular *auto da fè* (Alvar and his wife being the only victims), the awful ceremony of burning was to take place in the square, of which the buildings of the Inquisition formed one side. Mass had been performed before day-break, in the chapel of the Inquisition, at which the victims were compelled

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to be present; and about half-past seven, the dread procession left the Inquisition gates. The soldiers and minor servitors marched first, forming a hollow square, in the centre of which were the stakes, and huge fagots piled around. Then came the sacred cross, covered with a black veil, and its body-guard of priests. The victims, each surrounded by monks, appeared next, closely followed by the higher officers and Inquisitors; and a band of fifty men in rich dresses of black satin and silver, closed the procession.

We have no space to linger on the ceremonies always attendant on the burning of Inquisitorial prisoners. Although from the more private nature of the rites, these ceremonies were greatly curtailed, it was rather more than half-an-hour after nine when the victims were bound to their respective stakes, and the executioners approached with their blazing brands.

There was no change in the countenance of either prisoner. Pale they were, yet calm and firm; all of human feeling had been merged in the martyr's courage, and the martyr's faith.

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One look had been exchanged between them—of love spiritualised to look beyond the grave—of encouragement to endure for their God, even to the end. The sky was still cloudless, the sun still looked down on that scene of horror; and then was a hush —a pause—for so it felt in nature, that stilled the very breathing of those around.

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is ONE—the Sole and Holy ONE; there is no unity like His unity!" were the words which broke that awful pause, in a voice distinct, unfaltering, and musical as its wont; and it was echoed by the sweet tones from woman's lips, so thrilling in their melody, the rudest nature started. It was the signal of their fate. The executioners hastened forward; the brands were applied to the turf of the piles—the flames blazed up beneath their hand—when, at that moment, there came a shock, as if the very earth were cloven asunder, the heavens rent in twain. A crash so loud, so fearful, so appalling, as if the whole of Lisbon had been shivered to its foundations, and a shriek, or rather thousands and thousands of human voices,

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blended in one wild piercing cry of agony and terror, seeming to burst from every quarter at the self-same instant, and fraught with universal woe! The buildings around shook, as impelled by a mighty whirlwind, though no sound of such was heard. The earth heaved, yawned, closed, and rocked again, as the billows of the ocean, when lashed to fury. It was a moment of untold horror. The crowd, assembled to witness the martyrs' death, fled wildly shrieking on every side. Scattered to the heaving ground the blazing piles lay powerless to injure: their bonds were shivered; their guards were fled. One bound brought Alvar to his wife, and he clasped her in his arms. "God! God of mercy! save us yet again! Be with us to the end!" he exclaimed; and faith winged the prayer. On—on he sped; up—up in direction of the heights, where he knew comparative safety lay; but ere he reached them, the innumerable sights and sounds of horror that yawned upon his way! Every street, and square, and avenue was choked with shattered ruins; rent from top to bottom, houses, convents, and churches presented the

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most fearful aspect of ruin; while every second minute a new impetus seemed to be given to the convulsed earth, causing those that remained still perfect to rock and rend. Huge stones, falling from every crack, were crushing the miserable fugitives as they rushed on, seeking safety they knew not where. The rafters of every roof, wrenched from their fastenings, stood upright a brief while, and then fell in hundreds together, with a crash perfectly appalling. The very ties of nature were severed in the wild search for safety. Individual life alone appeared worth preserving. None dared seek the fate of friends—none dared ask, "Who lives?" in that one scene of universal death.

On—on sped Alvar and his precious burden; on, over the piles of ruins; on, unhurt amidst the showers of stones, which, hurled in the air as easily as a ball cast from an infant's hand, fell back again laden with a hundred deaths. On, amid the rocking and yawning earth, beholding thousands swallowed up, crushed and maimed, worse than death itself, for they were left to a lingering torture—to die a thou-

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sand deaths in anticipating one—on, over the disfigured heaps of dead, and the unrecognised masses of what had once been magnificent and gorgeous buildings. His eye was well nigh blinded with the shaking and tottering movement of all things animate and inanimate before him; and his path obscured by the sudden and awful darkness, which had changed that bright glowing blue of the sunny sky into a pall of dense and terrible blackness, becoming thicker and denser with every succeeding minute, till a darkness which might be felt, enveloped that devoted city as with the grim shadow of death. His ear was deafened by the appalling sounds of human agony and Nature's wrath; for now, sounds as of a hundred water-spouts, the dull continued roar of subterranean thunder, becoming at times loud as the discharge of a thousand cannons; at others, resembling the sharp grating sound of hundreds and hundreds of chariots driven full speed over the stones; and this, mingled with the piercing shrieks of women, the hoarser cries and shouts of men, the deep terrible groans of mental agony, and the shriller screams of instantaneous death, had

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usurped the place of the previous awful stillness, till every sense of those who yet survived seemed distorted and maddened. And nature herself, convulsed and freed from restraining bonds, appeared about to return to that chaos whence she had leaped at the word of God!

Still, still Alvar rushed forwards, preserved amidst it all, as if the arm of a merciful Providence was indeed around him and his Almah, marking them for life in the very midst of death. Making his rapid way across the ruins of St. Paul's, which magnificent church had fallen in the first shock, crushing the vast congregation assembled within its walls, Alvar paused one moment, undecided whether to seek the banks of the river, or still to make for the western heights. There was a moment's hush and pause in the convulsion of nature, but Alvar dared not hope for its continuance. Ever and anon the earth still heaved, and houses opened from base to roof and closed without further damage. With a brief fervid cry for continued guidance and protection, scarcely conscious which way in reality he took, and still folding Almah

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to his bosom—so supernaturally strengthened that the weakness of humanity seemed far from him—Rodriguez hurried on, taking the most open path to the Estrella Hill. An open space was gained, half way to the summit, commanding a view of the banks of the river and the ruins around. Panting, almost breathless, yet still struggling with his own exhaustion to encourage Almah, Alvar an instant rested, ere he plunged anew into the narrower streets. A shock, violent, destructive, convulsive as the first, flung them prostrate; while the renewed and increased sounds of wailing, the tremendous and repeated crashes on every side, the disappearance of the towers, steeples, and turrets which yet remained, revealed the further destructiveness which had befallen. A new and terrible cry added to the universal horror.

"The sea! the sea!" Alvar sprung to his feet and, clasped in each other's arms, he and Almah gazed beneath. Not a breath of wind stirred, yet the river (which being at that point four miles wide appeared like the element they had termed it) tossed and heaved as impelled by a mighty storm—and on

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it came, roaring, foaming, tumbling, as every bound were loosed, on over the land to the very heart of the devoted city, sweeping off hundreds in its course; and retiring with such velocity, and so far beyond its natural banks, that vessels were left dry which had five minutes before ridden in water seven fathoms deep. Again and again this phenomenon took place; the vessels in the river, at the same instant, whirled round and round with frightful rapidity, and smaller boats dashed upwards, falling back to disappear beneath the booming waters. As if chained to the spot where they stood, fascinated by this very horror, Alvar and his wife yet gazed; their glance fixed on the new marble quay, where thousands and thousands of the fugitives had congregated, fixed as if unconsciously foreboding what was to befall. Again the tide rushed in—on, on, over the massive ruins, heaving, raging, swelling, as a living thing; and, at that same instant, the quay and its vast burden of humanity sunk within an abyss of boiling waters, into which the innumerable boats around were alike impelled, leaving not a trace, even

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when the angry waters returned to their channel, suddenly as they had left it, to mark what had been.

"'Twas the voice of God impelled me hither, rather than pausing beside those fated banks. Almah, my best beloved, bear up yet a brief while more—He will spare and save us as He hath done now. Merciful Providence! Behold another wrathful element threatens to swallow up all of life and property which yet remains. Great God, this is terrible!"

And terrible it was: from three several parts of the ruined city huge fires suddenly blazed up, hissing, crackling, ascending as clear columns of liquid flame; up against the pitchy darkness infusing it with tenfold horror—spreading on every side—consuming all of wood and wall, which the earth and water had left unscathed; wreathing its serpent-like folds in and out the ruins, forming strange and terribly beautiful shapes of glowing colouring; fascinating the eye with admiration, yet bidding the blood chill, and the flesh creep. Fresh cries and shouts had marked its

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rise and progress; but, aghast and stupified, those who yet survived made no effort to check its way, and on every side it spread, forming lanes and squares of glowing red, flinging its lurid glare so vividly around, that even those on the distant heights could see to read by it; and fearful was the scene that awful light revealed. Now, for the first time, could Alvar trace the full extent of destruction which had befallen. That glorious city, which a few brief hours previous lay reposing in its gorgeous sunlight —mighty in its palaces and towers—in its churches, convents, theatres, magazines, and dwellings—rich in its numberless artizans and stores—lay perished and prostrate as the grim spectre of long ages past, save that the fearful groups yet passing to and fro, or huddled in kneeling and standing masses, some bathed in the red glare of the increasing fires, others black and shapeless — save when a sudden flame flashed on them, disclosing what they were—revealed a strange and horrible PRESENT, yet lingering amid what seemed the shadows of a fearful PAST. Nor was the convulsion of nature yet at an end;—

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the earth still rocked and heaved at intervals, often impelling the hissing flames more strongly and devouringly forward, and by tossing the masses of burning ruin to and fro, gave them the semblance of a sea of flame. The ocean itself too, yet rose and sunk, and rose again; vessels were torn from their cables, anchors wrenched from their soundings and hurled in the air—while the warring waters, the muttering thunders, the crackling flames, formed a combination of sounds which, even without their dread adjuncts of human agony and terror, were all-sufficient to freeze the very life-blood, and banish every sense and feeling, save that of stupifying dread.

But human love, and superhuman faith, saved from the stagnating horror. The conviction that the God of his fathers was present with him, and would save him and Almah to the end, never left him for an instant, but urged him to exertions, which, had he not had this all-supporting faith, he would himself have deemed impossible. And his faith spake truth. The God of infinite mercy, who had stretched

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out His own right hand to save, and marked the impotence of the wrath and cruelty of man, was with him still, and, despite of the horrors yet lingering round them, despite of the varied trials, fatigues, and privations, attendant on their rapid flight, led them to life and joy, and bade them stand forth the witnesses and proclaimers of His unfailing love, His everlasting providence!

With the great earthquake of Lisbon, the commencement of which our preceding pages have faintly endeavoured to pourtray, and its terrible effects on four millions of square miles, our tale has no farther connection. The third day brought our poor fugitives to Badajos, where Alvar's property had been secured. They tarried there only long enough to learn the blessed tidings of Hassan Ben Ahmed's safe arrival in England with their child; that his faithfulness, in conjunction with that of their agent in Spain, had already safely transmitted the bulk of their property to the English funds; and to obtain Ben Ahmed's address, forward tidings of their providential escape to him, and proceed on their journey.

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An anxious, but not a prolonged interval, enabled them to accomplish it safely, and once more did the doubly rescued press their precious boy to their yearning hearts, and feel that conjugal and parental love burned, if it could be, the dearer, brighter, more unspeakably precious, from the dangers they had passed; and not human love alone. The veil of secresy was removed, they were in a land whose merciful and liberal government granted to the exile and the wanderer a home of peace and rest; where they might worship the God of Israel according to the law He gave; and in hearts like those of Alvar and his Almah, prosperity could have no power to extinguish or deaden the religion of love and faith, which adversity had engendered.

The appearance of old Gonzalos and his family in England, a short time after Alvar's arrival there, removed their last remaining anxiety, and gave them increased cause for thankfulness. Not a member of the merchant's family, and more wonderful still, not a portion of his property, had been lost amid the universal ruin; and to this very

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day, his descendants recall his providential preservation, by giving on every returning anniversary of that awful day certain articles of clothing to a limited number of male and female poor.*

* A fact.

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